Hafa Adai!

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CPA vetting if some employees can be exempted from pot drug testing. PAGE 2

'We will make sure to get Atalig's answers about BOOST program' PAGE 3

DOL chief dodges illegal OT suit

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
kimberly_esmores@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

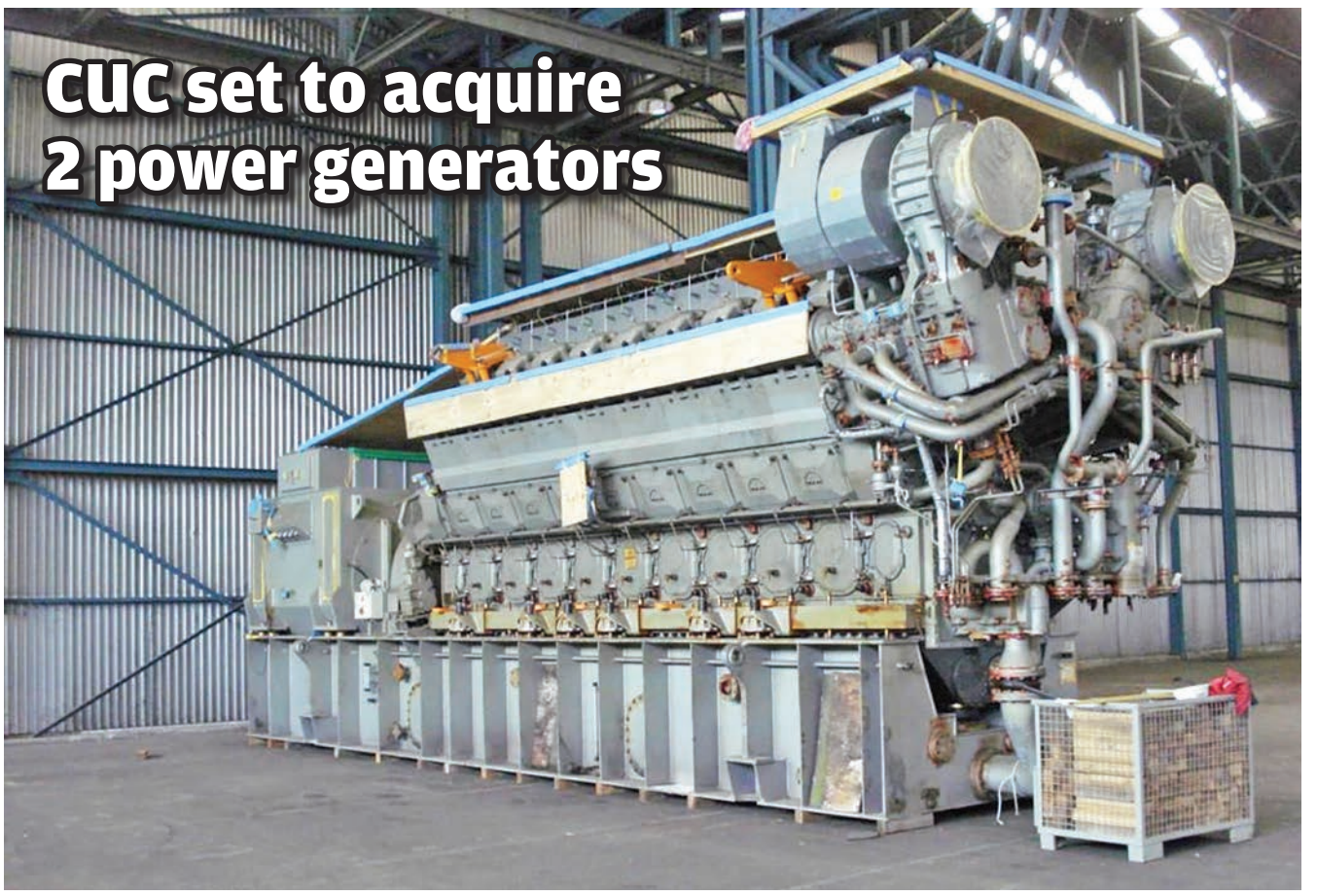
CNMI Labor Secretary Julia Victoria "Vicky" Benavente has dodged the alleged illegal Typhoon Yutu overtime pay lawsuit that the Office of the Attorney General has been filing against some Torres administration Cabinet members.

Benavente

The Office of the Attorney General, through Chief Solicitor Robert Glass Jr., voluntarily dismissed last Wednesday its complaint it filed against Benavente in Superior Court over allegedly excessive typhoon overtime pay.

See DOL on Page 4

CUC set to acquire 2 power generators



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

File photo shows the type of Man Mitsubishi Engine 8.7-megawatt unit generator that the Commonwealth Utilities Corp. has procured for Saipan's Power Plant 1. One engine is now in transit from Germany, while funding for a second one has been acquired.

By LEIGH GASES
leigh_gases@saipantribune.com
CORRESPONDENT

The Commonwealth Utilities Corp. has procured an 8.7-megawatt unit generator and has secured funding for an additional unit.

These new generators will replace two 40-year-old engines at Saipan's Power Plant 1, with the overall goal to completely replace the plant's four units.

Initially, CUC was provided funding worth $8 million for the first replacement engine

See CUC on Page 4

Taliban bar Afghan women from university education

Afghan students queue at one of Kabul University's gates in Kabul, Afghanistan, on Feb. 26, 2022. AP

KABUL, Afghanistan (AP)—Afghanistan's Taliban rulers on Tuesday banned female students from attending universities effective immediately in the latest edict cracking down on women's rights and freedoms.

See TALIBAN on Page 4

We're dreaming of a green Christmas

TOGETHER, WE CAN

By ROBERTA GUERRERO
Special to the Saipan Tribune

The days leading up to Christmas are exciting and full of anticipation about celebrations and sharing love and joy with family and friends. Preparing for this wonderful time includes planning meals, decorating homes, and fulfilling Christmas wish lists. The team at Mariana Islands Nature Alliance looks at the holidays from a sustainable lens and imagines how Mother Earth would recommend we celebrate a "Green Christmas."

GOVERNOR'S COUNCIL OF ECONOMIC ADVISERS

See column on Page 10

INSIDE

OFF THE WALL

Speeding motorists in Florida receive an odorous onion from a deputy dressed as the Grinch.

PAGE 26

SCIENCE & TECH

A fossil site in Nevada may have been an maternity ward where the creatures came to give birth.

PAGE 26

LIFE & STYLE

Netflix said Wednesday it plans to build a state-of-the-art production facility at a former Army base.

PAGE 27

SCAN ME WITH A COMPATIBLE QR READER TO KEEP UPDATED ON ALL THE LATEST NEWS.

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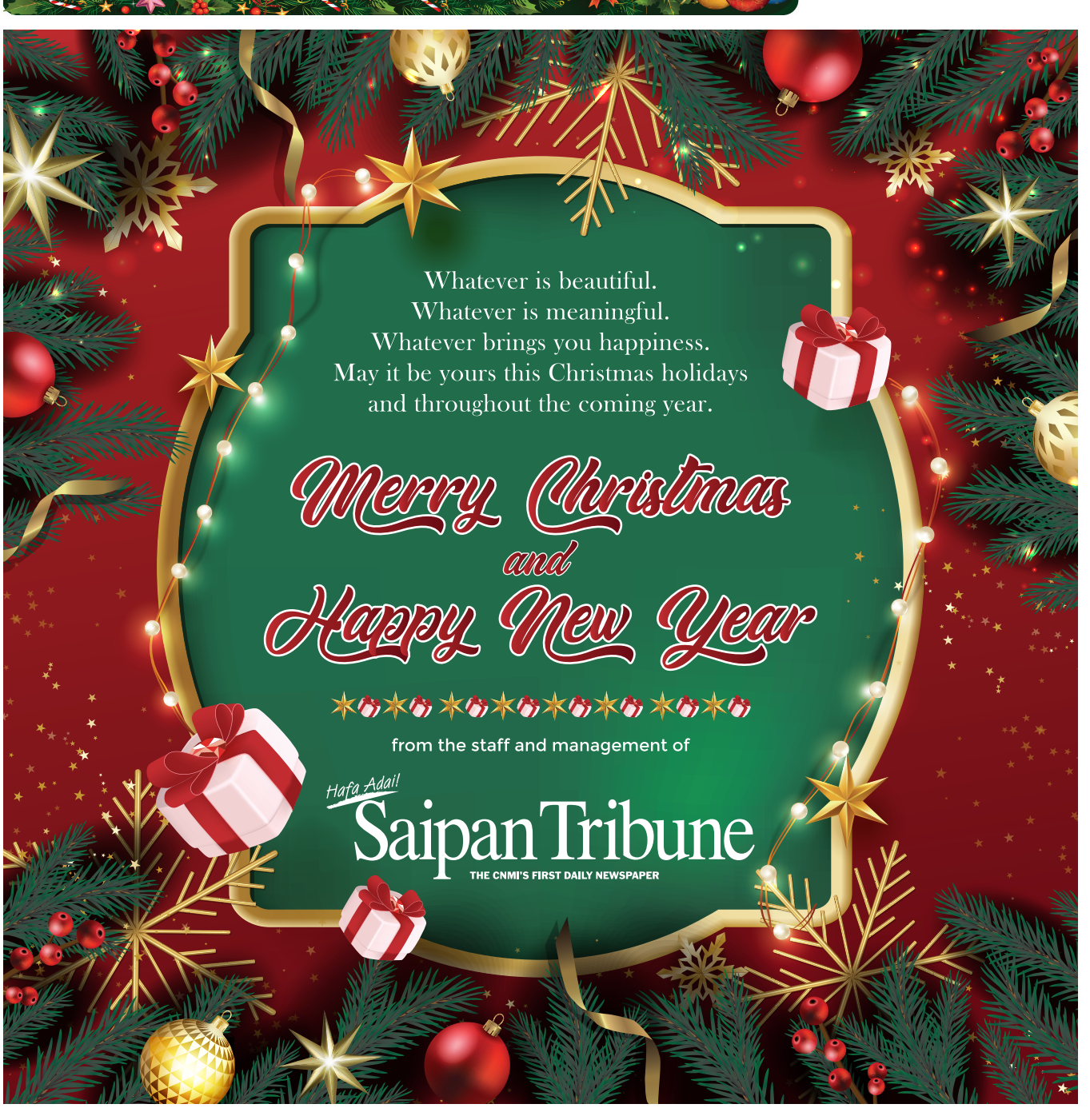

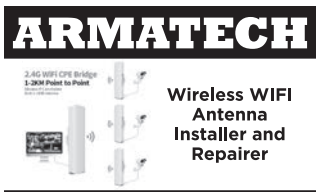

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ATTORNEY FOR Plaitiffs

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

DEELYN MANOSHI CAMACHO KEREMIUS, VINCENT ANTHONY CAMACHO KEREMIUS AND JOHN CHRISTIAN CAMACHO KEREMIUS, Plaintiffs, :
-v- **CIVIL ACTION NO. 22-0085**
BERNARD FRANCIS KEREMIUS and MSJ, LLC, Defendants. :

FIRST AMENDED SUMMONS

TO THE ABOVE-NAMED DEFENDANTS:

YOU ARE HEREBY SUMMONED and notified to file any answer you wish to make to the Complaint, a copy of which is given you herewith, within twenty-one (21) days after service of this Summons upon you, and to deliver or mail a copy of your answer to THE LAW OFFICES OF MICHAEL A. WHITE, LLC, the Plaintiff's attorneys, whose address is Post Office Box 5222, Saipan, MP 96950, as soon as practicable after filing your answer or sending it to the Clerk of Courts for filing.

Your answer should be in writing and filed with the Clerk of this Court at Susupe, Saipan. It may be prepared and signed for you by your counsel and sent to the Clerk of this Court by messenger or mail. It is not necessary for you to appear personally until further notice.

If you fail to answer in accordance with this Summons, judgment by default may be taken against you for your relief demanded in the Complaint.

By order of the above Court:

/s/
Clerk of Court

Dated, this 22nd day of August, 2022.

Local

CPA vetting if some employees can be exempted from pot drug testing

The Commonwealth Ports Authority held board committee meetings yesterday on Tinian. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

By LEIGH GASES
leigh_gases@saipantribune.com
CORRESPONDENT

The Commonwealth Ports Authority is vetting whether certain classes of CPA employees may be exempted from the required cannabis drug testing.

During a CPA board meeting on Tinian yesterday, one item on their agenda was CPA's drug policy and whether or not it is feasible for certain employees to be exempted from being tested for cannabis.

"What we're considering right now is differentiating between safety sensitive employees and law enforcement, versus non-safety sensitive employees," said CPA board chair Kimberlyn King-Hinds in a phone interview after the meeting.

Currently, CPA tests all their employees for cannabis use, as well as for illegal drugs such as cocaine, amphetamines, opiates, and PCP.

King-Hinds assured that no CPA employee is ever allowed to be under the influence of any substances while on the job, but what CPA is vetting for is whether or not to drug test employees who use cannabis on their own time, as cannabis does stay in the system for a while.

"I think that there are a lot of people who suffer from various ailments and there's a lot of people who use cannabis to find a certain type of relief. For whatever reason, whether it be chronic illnesses or just mental health issues, to me, it's better than alcohol. As long as you're not coming into work under the influence, I think people should be free to do certain things in their own private time," said King-Hinds on what she thought of this policy they are vetting.

Another thing the CPA is looking at is whether it's feasible to go about this route and whether or not it will impact federal funding.

"If it impacts federal funding at all, then this is not a policy that we will be adopting. But if there is no impact—and obviously we're going to test for meth and all those other illegal substances, but for marijuana since it's legal, we could eliminate that for non-safety sensitive employees. But if it impacts our federal grant insurance requirements, then we

See CPA on Page 4

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‘We will make sure to get Atalig answers about BOOST program’

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
kimberly_esmores@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Finance Secretary David Atalig may have been excused once more from testifying before the joint committee that’s looking into the Torres administration’s Building Optimism, Opportunity and Stability Together, or BOOST program but he will sooner or later have to face the committee.

This was assured by Judiciary and Governmental Operation Committee chair Celina Babauta (D-Saipan), who said that the committee has provided Atalig more accommodations than anyone else who has been summoned to testify in these proceedings.

“We have patiently provided Mr. Atalig more accommodation than any other witnesses and we have granted him every extension reasonably possible,” she said.

Babauta hopes the numerous requests for extension isn’t a ploy to evade testifying before the committee. “Mr. Atalig has advised the committee that he will be off island next week and will not be returning until after the new year. I hope that he is not using this time to avoid this body or to let the clock run out in these proceedings,” she said. “But I want to assure everybody on this committee and the public that all hope is not lost. We have not run out of options. We will make sure that Mr. Atalig answers as to his involvement in the BOOST program. whether if it’s when he returns from his off-island trip, or when the next Legislature convenes. He May have dodged today’s hearing, but he cannot elude this problem forever.”

Babauta’s committee, together with that of the House Ways and Means Committee chaired by Rep. Donald Manglona (Ind-Rota), is looking into the details of the BOOST program.

Atalig sat before the joint committee yesterday, supposedly to speak of his involvement in the BOOST program. However, he informed the committee that he has yet to obtain legal counsel after the Office of the Attorney General authorized him to seek personal counsel.

After a brief recess, Manglona granted Atalig yet another extension, which raised concerns for some committee members.

According to documents acquired by the committee in relation to the BOOST program, correspondence between BOOST administrator John Arroyo and Atalig implied that the DOF secretary submitted documents for Saipan Surf and TROVE and was using his role as Finance chief to speed up the process for these companies.

The correspondence between Arroyo and Atalig also allegedly showed Atalig asking Arroyo when he could personally pick up the checks, just days after submitting the application packets for Saipan Surf and TROVE despite one of the packets missing a significant number of requirements for the program.

Babauta said the committee will convene tomorrow with Commerce Secretary Edward Deleon Guerrero and Jesus Taisague and that the committee has several other witnesses lined up.

“It is my recommendation as a suggestion to all witnesses who have not appeared before this body yet that it is in your best interest to come when we summon you,” she said.

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CHRISTMAS Season!
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USCG ensures Guam port safety through boardings, exams

SANTA RITA, Guam— To ensure port security and safety of both the port and mariners, U.S. Coast Guard Forces Micronesia/Sector Guam conducted a boarding and exam of the 370-foot Tuvalu-flagged motor vessel *Kenyo* in the vicinity of Guam in mid-October.

"This effort ensures the security and safety of the vessel, crew, and the port," Cmdr. Greg Sickels, acting commander of U.S. Coast Guard Forces Micronesia/Sector Guam and the acting captain of the port. "The Port of Guam handles over 90 percent of total imports to the island, and it has far-reaching effects for the community here and throughout Micronesia."

The Sector Boarding Team first contacted the *Kenyo* and boarded the ship 13 miles offshore to confirm the safety and security of the vessel and crew. This visit is the Kenyo's first time calling on a U.S. port, thus requiring a U.S. Coast Guard boarding before arrival.

"The vessel crew was compliant, and we verified there were no issues with their documentation or the crew composition before they arrived in port," said Ensign Ronnie Rivera, the Sector Boarding Team supervisor. "Ensuring the security of our ports, waterways, and coastal infrastructure is important, especially here in Guam where the port plays such a vital role. We have excellent relationships with our port partners."

The *Kenyo*, carrying cement, was then attended in port by U.S. Coast Guard vessel inspectors under the port state control program. Port state control is the inspection of foreign-flagged ships in national ports to verify that the ship's material condition and equipment comply with domestic and international security, safety, and environmental standards and that the ship is crewed and operated in compliance with these rules. The *Kenyo* crew did well with their drills. They required minor fixes to some equipment and a class review of their emergency steering to compliance before departure.

The U.S. Coast Guard port state control program has existed since 1994, and the primary goal of these exams is safety. The safety of the crew and the safety of the ports they operate. The inspectors will review certificates and documentation, evaluate the vessel's condition, and run safety drills such as firefighting and abandoning the ship with the crew. At times the vessel crew may be detained and required to make repairs or updates to the ship before it is allowed to sail again. On average, the Guam-based inspectors conduct over 120 port state control exams annually.

To ensure port security and safety of both the port and mariners, U.S. Coast Guard Forces Micronesia/Sector Guam's marine inspectors conduct a port state control exam on the 370-foot Tuvalu-flagged motor vessel *Kenyo* delivering cement to the Hanson Facility at the Port of Guam on Oct. 19 and 20, 2022. T

U.S. COAST GUARD/CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER SARA MUIR

A longer version of this story is available at www. saipantribune.com

TALIBAN

From Page 1

Despite initially promising a more moderate rule respecting rights for women's and minorities, the Taliban have widely implemented their strict interpretation of Islamic law, or Sharia.

They have banned girls from middle school and high school, restricted women from most employment and ordered them to wear head-to-toe clothing in public. Women are also banned from parks and gyms.

The Taliban were ousted in 2001 by a U.S.-led coalition for harboring al-Qaida leader Osama bin Laden and returned to power after America's chaotic departure last year.

The decision was announced after a government meeting. A letter shared by the spokesman for the Ministry of Higher Education, Ziaullah Hashmi, told private and public universities to implement the ban as soon as possible and to inform the ministry once the ban is in place.

Hashmi tweeted the letter and confirmed its contents in a message to The Associated Press without giving further details.

The decision is certain to hurt efforts by the Taliban to win recognition from potential international donors at a time when the country is mired in a worsening humanitarian crisis. The international community has urged Taliban leaders to reopen schools and give women their right to public space.

The university ban comes weeks after Afghan girls took their high school graduation exams, even though they have been banned from classrooms since the Taliban took over the country last year.

"I can't fulfill my dreams, my hopes. Everything is disappearing before my eyes and I can't do anything about it," said a third-year journalism and communication student at Nangarhar University. She did not want to be identified for fear of reprisals.

"Is being a girl a crime? If that's the case, I wish I wasn't a girl," she added. "My father had dreams for me, that his daughter would become a talented journalist in the future. That is now destroyed. So, you tell me, how will a person feel in this situation?"

She added that she had not lost all hope yet.

"God willing, I will continue my studies in any way. I'm starting online studies. And, if it doesn't work, I will have to leave the country and go to another country," she said.

U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres condemned the decision, calling it another "broken promise" from the Taliban and a "very troubling" move.

"It's difficult to imagine how a country can develop, can deal with all of the challenges that it has, without the active participation of women and the education," Guterres said.

CUC

From Page 1

from the Office of the Governor, while the second engine's funding allocated by the Department of Finance is worth $7.2 million.

According to CUC executive director, Gary P. Camacho, the replacement of this critically important infrastructure is necessary "to stabilize the electrical supply to residential homes, businesses, government offices, and other economic-driven sectors. With the additional new unit, an ample supply of electricity will be generated to keep our water and wastewater facilities operational. It will also solve several of CUC's biggest concerns with grid stability, failure of unit generators, and the maintenance cycling of its engines."

Camacho also mentioned that "almost half the power demand will be coming from these brand new, more efficient unit generators, and will greatly assist us with reducing fuel consumption."

The first unit generator is currently in transit from Germany and is awaiting logistics to be completed by a contractor. "Once it arrives, which is now set for the first quarter of next year, the contractor will provide transport and deliver it to the existing power plant. There they will install, commence, and transfer it to CUC after testing is certified and accepted," said deputy director for Electric Power System, Dallas M. Peavey and Power Generation manager Richard Cano.

"Then, the contractor will remain with CUC for one year to monitor the new unit generator," said Camacho.

Along with renewable energy plans such as the utility-scale solar systems, "CUC's intent is to continue to find ways not only through renewable energies but also through baseload power plants for savings. And we believe that baseload power plants will have a much more significant means of savings by replacing these old units than any other approach that we may have because it is consistent, 24-hour a day savings," said Camacho.

DOL

From Page 1

According to Glass, the NMI Rule of Civil Procedure allows the plaintiff to dismiss the case without a court order by filing a notice of dismissal before the opposing party answers or makes a motion for summary judgment.

"Neither an answer or a motion for summary judgement has been served in this case. Therefore, the plaintiff moves to voluntarily dismiss this action," Glass said.

He did not elaborate on the reason why the AG's office was dismissing the lawsuit against Benavente.

Attorney General Edward Manibusan has been filing complaints this past week in Superior Court against department heads under the Torres administration for allegedly receiving illegal Yutu overtime compensation.

In the recent filings, Manibusan reiterated that he is filing the suits on behalf of the people of the Commonwealth, who were harmed and have been harmed by the excessive compensation received by Commonwealth government employees who were not entitled to typhoon emergency premium compensation, overtime, or extra pay for work performed during the declared major disaster and state of significant emergency relating to Super Typhoon Yutu.

Benavente, specifically, received a total of $36,198.43 in overtime pay related to Typhoon Yutu.

In its earlier lawsuit, the AG's office sought to have Benavente pay back the over $31,000 in allegedly illegal overtime pay she received back in fiscal year 2019 and 2020.

According to the lawsuit, Benavente received typhoon emergency premium pay on multiple occasions and her typhoon emergency premium pay was paid at a rate of 2.5 times her base salary.

On Nov. 21, 2018, she received gross wages in the amount of $1,337.05 as typhoon emergency premium pay. The following month, Dec. 19, 2018, Benavente received gross wages in the amount of $6,578.13 as typhoon emergency premium pay.

On Dec. 29, 2018, she received gross wages in the amount of $5,276.77 as typhoon emergency premium pay.

A few days later, Dec. 31, 2018, she received gross wages in the amount of $3,375.06 as typhoon emergency premium pay.

The last time she received compensation was Nov. 8, 2019, when Benavente received gross wages in the amount of $6,756.61 as typhoon emergency premium pay.

CPA

From Page 2

will not pursue it.

As it is in its preliminary stages of discussion, it's also a discussion that CPA will need to have with the Department of Transportation and the Federal Aviation Administration.

As to why it was raised at the meeting, King-Hinds said it was requested by a board member and that "society is changing. The use of cannabis is becoming very similar to alcohol consumption. There's no prohibition from you drinking alcohol, but there's a prohibition from you being drunk on the job. The idea basically is to treat it similar to that, but only for [CPA] employees who are not in law enforcement, [or are safety sensitive employees]…"

"This is just a sign of the times. We continue to evolve, to change." King-Hinds did note that cannabis is a sensitive issue to some people who may have different views on it, but that since the community voted to legalize the use of cannabis for medicinal and recreational use, "it's time to move forward and start destigmatizing [it]."

According to King-Hinds, this cannabis policy is on the list of their progressive policies, along with their recent policy that aims to completely deter the agency from emitting greenhouse gases by year 2050, and their self-care leave policy for employees that was implemented last year.

"Those are policies that I think are very progressive, and this new policy that addresses cannabis consumption is another one that's going to be added on to that list, but obviously this needs to be fully vetted by our federal partners," said King-Hinds.

Small craft advisory until 6am today

A small craft advisory is in effect until 6am today, Friday, in the coastal waters of Saipan, Tinian, and Rota. A small craft advisory means that wind speeds of 21 to 33 knots are expected to produce wave conditions hazardous to small craft.

Based on the information received from the National Weather Service in Tiyan, Guam, and compiled at the CNMI Emergency Operations Center State Warning Point, winds of 15 to 20 knots with frequent gusts to 25 knots will be present in Marianas coastal waters until 6am today.

Conditions will be hazardous to small craft. Inexperienced mariners, especially those operating smaller vessels, should avoid boating in hazardous conditions. ***(Saipan Tribune)***

Holiday hours at Koblerville Community Center

The Koblerville COVID-19 Community Center will have the following holiday hours:

■ Dec. 25, 2022: Testing–Closed (Christmas Day)

Office Hours – Closed (Christmas Day)

■ Dec. 26, 2022: Testing – 8am to 11am (In observance of Christmas Day)

Office Hours – 8am to 12pm (In observance of Christmas Day)

■ Jan. 1, 2023: Testing – Closed (New Year's Day)

Office Hours – Closed (New Year's Day)

■ Jan. 2, 2023: Testing – 8am to 11am (In observance of New Year's Day)

Office Hours – 8am to 12pm (In observance of New Year's Day)

The Travel Test team can be reached at (670) 785-9966 or (670) 287-7570. ***(PR)***

The Koblerville COVID-19 Community Center. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

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Happy Holidays!

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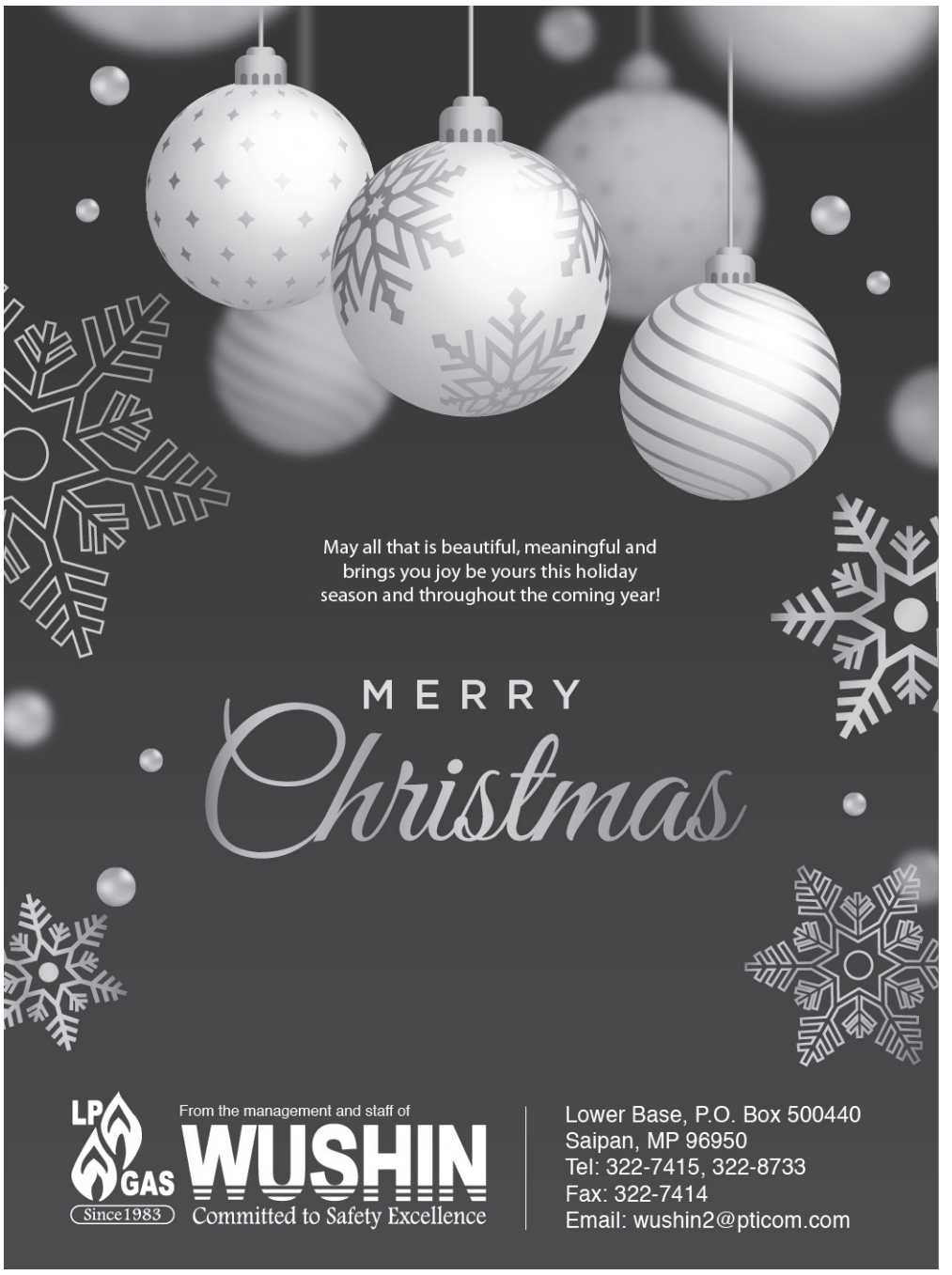


Admin leave is OK'd for some Executive Branch employees

Gov. Ralph DLG Torres authorized yesterday the grant of administrative leave for non-essential employees of the Executive Branch for today, Dec. 23, 2022, in the runup to Christmas Day.

In a memorandum addressed to department and activity heads, he said he is authorizing the administrative leave for non-essential employees of the Commonwealth government's Executive Branch "in the spirit of the holiday season."

"This holiday season, we take the time to reflect on the people, blessings, and experiences of this past year that have brought us to where we are today, and we look to give back to one another by spending time with our loved ones, giving thanks, and spreading love, kindness, and goodwill throughout our community," Torres' memorandum stated. "My family and I wish you and your loved ones a blessed Christmas weekend. May this holiday season bring you all an abundance of blessings as we look to a prosperous new year for our Commonwealth. Please continue to stay safe and look out for one another. Merry Christmas and happy holidays, Marianas!" ***(Saipan Tribune)***

Hawaii winter storm causes outages

HONOLULU (AP)—A strong winter storm downed trees, knocked out power and flooded soccer fields as it moved across the Hawaiian Islands. Snow fell on the Big Island's tallest peaks.

National Weather Service meteorologist Scott Rozanski said Tuesday that the weather is typical of the kind of storm Hawaii occasionally gets in December and January. He called these storms "infrequent but not unusual."

The cold front came in from the northwest, delivering thunderstorms, powerful wind gusts and high surf. Some residents reported pea-sized hail, which Rozanski said was to be expected during a storm of this kind.

Honolulu received dozens of calls about downed trees and branches. The county's parks department closed Waipio's soccer fields because they were saturated.

A power outage forced the closure of the Wailuku courthouse. That prompted Hawaii Chief Justice Mark Recktenwald to order the rescheduling of hearings, trials and filing deadlines on Maui.

Talmadge Magno, the director of Hawaii County Civil Defense Agency, said that downed trees and flooding have blocked some roads.

Snow fell on Mauna Kea and Mauna Loa, including where a vent was spewing lava only a few weeks ago as Mauna Loa erupted for the first time in 38 years. Winter snow on these mountains is not uncommon at high elevations. Mauna Kea rises to 13,803 feet (4,207 meters), and Mauna Loa is 13,679 feet (4,169 m).

COMMONWEALTH UTILITIES CORPORATION
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

INVITATION FOR BID
CUC-IFB-23-003

SUPPLY AND DELIVERY OF MEDIUM-DUTY BOOM TRUCK VEHICLE

The Office of the Executive Director for the Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC) is soliciting competitive sealed bids for the supply and delivery of a medium-duty boom truck for the Power Plant in Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

Prospective Bidders must pre-register with the CUC Procurement & Supply Division. The Bid Package may be obtained from the CUC Procurement and Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Saipan, between 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on government observed holidays, upon completion of registration and presentation of a receipt evidencing a non-refundable payment to the CUC Treasury Section, by cash, check or credit card in the amount of $100.00 (non-refundable) for one IFB package set.

One (1) original and Five (5) hard copies must be submitted in a sealed envelope marked ***"CUC-IFB-23-003, Supply and Delivery of a Medium Duty Boom Truck"*** to the CUC Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950, **no later than 10:00 AM (ChST) on January 4, 2023** at which time they will be publicly opened and read aloud. Bids mailed via postal or courier service must be received on or before the due date and time or post-marked before the submission deadline. Late submissions and conditional offers will not be considered.

A Bid Guarantee of fifteen (15%) percent of the total bid price must accompany the bids. The security deposit may be in cash, certified check, cashier's check, or bid bond executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety. Surety Company must be authorized to do business in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

All insurers' questions, concerns and qualification should be handled by the Department of Commerce Office of the Insurance Commissioner (OIC). The OIC is tasked with regulating and monitoring compliance to the CNMI's Insurance Code (Title 4, Division 7). *Bidders are required to submit a clearance from the OIC certifying their insurer of choice is in compliance with the CNMI's Insurance Code.*

All bidders are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the bidders due to lack of information or understanding of the bid requirements in the course of Contractor's preparation of a bid or supply under the contract. The IFB does not commit CUC to award a contract, to pay any cost incurred in the preparation of the bid under this request, or to procure or contract for goods. This bid and the ensuing contract shall be executed as per the CUC Procurement Regulations.

Questions or requests for clarification will be entertained only from registered Proponents and must be submitted in writing **no later than 10:00 AM (ChST) on December 19, 2022,** to Manny B. Sablan, CUC's Purchasing Administrator, via email manny.sablan@cucgov.org with copies to Jubal Slayer, CUC's Technical Manager for Oil via email at jubal.slayer@cucgov.org and Christie L. Sablan, CUC's Senior Administrative Technician at christie.sablan@cucgov.org.

CUC reserves the right to reject any or all bids for any reason and waive any defects in the said bids, if in its sole opinion, to do so would be in the best interest of CUC. All bids submitted shall become the property of CUC.

GARY P. CAMACHO
Executive Director

MANNY B. SABLAN
Purchasing Administrator

PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY
COMMONWEALTH HEALTHCARE CORPORATION

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)
RFP23-CHCC/ELC-EDE-005
EPIDEMIOLOGY AND LABORATORY CAPACITY (ELC) PROGRAM – ENHANCING DETECTION EXPANSION (EDE)

SUBMISSION DEADLINE: JAN. 16TH, 2023 TIME: 10:00AM (CHST)

"LABORATORY RENOVATION / IMPROVEMENT PROJECT"
(Coordinate, Design, Oversight Monitoring and Construction)
for CHC Hospital /Public Health Laboratory Department

INTERESTED PARTIES CAN DOWNLOAD THIS REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL FROM THE CHCC WEBSITE [WWW.CHCC.HEALTH]. ONCE AT THE SITE, NAVIGATE TO **REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS** TAB ON THE LEFT NAVIGATION BAR. CLICK ON THE URL FOR THIS RFP. YOU WILL BE REQUIRED TO ENTER DATA TO ALLOW US TO TRACK ALL REQUESTS FOR THIS OPPORTUNITY.

THE CHCC RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY AND ALL PROPOSAL AND TO WAIVE ANY IMPERFECTIONS IN ANY PROPOSAL, IF TO DO SO SHALL BE IN THE INTEREST OF THE CHCC. ALL PROPOSALS SHALL BECOME THE EXCLUSIVE PROPERTY OF THE COMMONWEALTH HEALTHCARE CORPORATION.

/S/ ESTHER L. MUNA
CHCC CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

/S/ CORA P. ADA
DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT & SUPPLY

PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY
COMMONWEALTH HEALTHCARE CORPORATION

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)
RFP23-CHCC/FACILITY-002

SUBMISSION DEADLINE: JAN. 3rd 2023 TIME: 10:00AM (CHST)

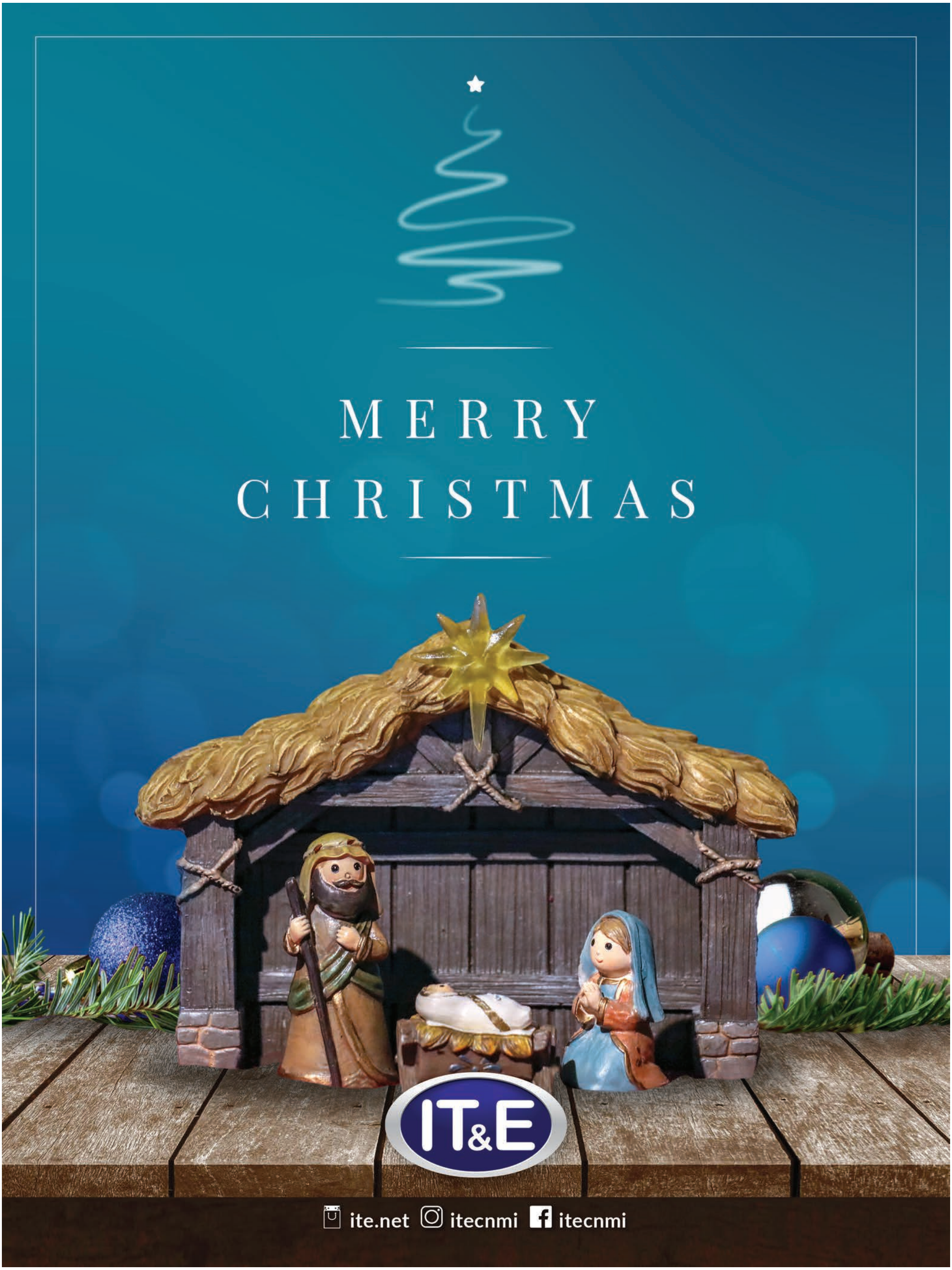
"WATER TREATMENT SYSTEMS OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE SERVICES FOR THE HOSPITAL AND HEMODIALYSIS"

INTERESTED PARTIES CAN DOWNLOAD THIS REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL FROM THE CHCC WEBSITE [WWW.CHCC.HEALTH]. ONCE AT THE SITE, NAVIGATE TO **REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS** TAB OF THE LEFT NAVIGATION BAR. CLICK ON THE URL FOR THIS RFP. YOU WILL BE REQUIRED TO ENTER DATA TO ALLOW US TO TRACK ALL REQUESTS FOR THIS OPPORTUNITY.

THE CHCC RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY AND ALL PROPOSAL AND TO WAIVE ANY IMPERFECTIONS IN ANY PROPOSAL. IF TO DO SO SHALL BE IN THE INTEREST OF THE CHCC. ALL PROPOSALS SHALL BECOME THE EXCLUSIVE PROPERTY OF THE COMMONWEALTH HEALTHCARE CORPORATION.

/S/ ESTHER L. MUNA
CHCC CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

/S/ CORA P. ADA
DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT & SUPPLY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COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY

MAIN OFFICE: SAIPAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, 2ND FLOOR ARRIVAL BLDG.
PO BOX 501055•SAIPAN•MP•96950
PHONE: (1-670) 237-6500/1 • FAX: (1-670) 234-5962
WEBSITE: WWW.CNMIPORTS.COM

REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATION STATEMENTS FOR CONSTRUCTION MANAGEMENT SERVICES

BENJAMIN TAISACAN MANGLONA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT AIRCRAFT PARKING APRON REHABILITATION

AIP 3-69-0003-34/XX

The Commonwealth Ports Authority's (CPA) is a public corporation and autonomous agency of the Government of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI). In accordance with its Procurement Rules and Regulations, CPA hereby seeks the services of qualified consulting firms to provide Construction Management Services for the Benjamin Taisacan Manglona International Airport Aircraft Parking Apron Rehabilitation Project, AIP 3-69-0003-34/XX.

The project is being funded by U.S. Federal Aviation Administration in accordance with CPA's Procurement Rules and Regulations, Section 40-50-202, Architect-Engineer Design and Construction Management Services.

The Request for Qualification (RFQ) Package is available at CPA's Administration Office, 2nd floor of the arrival terminal at the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport. No fee is required for obtaining the RFQ package. Electronic copies may be made available upon written request to Ms. Wendi Prater at wprater@cnmiports.com or Ms. Sheri Llagas at receptionist@cnmiports.com.

Questions regarding this request for qualification statements must be submitted in writing to Ms. Wendi L. Prater, CPA Executive Assistant/Project Manager, via email to wprater@cnmiports.com or hand delivered to the CPA Administration Office by no later than 5:00 p.m. CHST, local time, Friday, December 16, 2022.

The statements of professional qualification will be evaluated based on the criteria available in the RFQ package.

Interested Consultants are requested to submit one (1) original, four (4) copies and one (1) electronic version in .pdf of their statements of professional qualifications no later than **5:00 p.m. CHST, WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 28, 2022**. Statements of qualification must be presented by a combination of both brochures and the use of current U.S. Government Standard Form 330.

The CPA reserves the right to reject any or all statements of professional qualification for any reason, if in its sole opinion to do so would be in its best interest

/s/ CHRISTOPHER S. TENORIO
Executive Director

Date: November 22, 2022

JSTA, Japanese Society lead holiday cleanup

MVA

Representatives of 12 local businesses and offices join the Japan Saipan Travel Association and the Japanese Society of the Northern Marianas in their annual cleanup last Dec. 17, 2022, held this year at the Japanese Peace Memorial and Okinawan Peace Memorial in Marpi, Saipan.

As part of the Governor's Council of Economic Advisors' Public Private Partnership, the Japanese Society of the Northern Marianas and Japan Saipan Travel Association, along with other tourism partners, kept to their annual holiday tradition with a cleanup at the scenic area of Marpi, Saipan, last Saturday, Dec. 17.

The cleanup began at 9am and included volunteers from JSTA, the Japanese Society of the Northern Marianas, and 12 other local businesses and offices who cleaned at the Japanese Peace Memorial and Okinawan Peace Memorial. Participants included representatives of Northern Marianas Dive Operators Association, Aqua Connections, Big Eye LLC, Marianas Sports Club, Kento Ent., Inc., HM Wedding, Pacific Development, Inc., Kan Pacific, S2 Club, Saipan World Resort, Aqua Resort Club Saipan, and Marianas Visitors Authority.

JSTA traditionally conducts cleanups in major tourist areas on Saipan before Christmas and before the mid-year Golden Week holiday period. ***(MVA)***

Wishing you and your family a safe
Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!
For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given:
and the government shall be upon his shoulder:
and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor,
The mighty God, The everlasting Father,
The Prince of Peace.
Isaiah 9:6
THE BIRTH OF
Christ
Customers First
TRIPLE J
GREAT HARVEST BREAD CO. • SURF CLUB RESTAURANT • BAR-K-DINER • PAYLESS SUPERFRESH & TRUCKLOAD STORE • FIVESTAR WHOLESALE • WHOLESALE TO EVERYONE • TRIPLE J MOTORS • HERTZ & DOLLAR RENT-A-CAR • SURFRIDER RESORT HOTEL • TINIAN WESTERN LODGE • OCEAN RIDGE HOMES • SAIPAN COMFORT HOMES • SANDY BEACH HOMES • TRIPLE J CATERING • TINIAN VILLAGE LODGE • TINIAN CONFERENCE CENTER • TIRE, LUBE & CAR WASH SHOP • TINIAN GARDEN B&B
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Garapan Elementary School children perform at Hyatt

It is the fourth Friday of December and on deck at the Hyatt Regency Saipan today will be the MY WAVE Club of Garapan Elementary School starting at 5:30pm. Hyatt host Christmas performances every Friday to help spread the Yuletide cheer to guests and members of the community.

According to teacher Evelyn Alarcon, the MY WAVE Club was formed 12 years ago under the supervision of Evelyn Alarcon and Elsie Johnson. "The club has produced a lot of talents that participated in different community events such as Christmas in the Marianas, Man'amko visits, beach cleanups, street waving, and many more," she said.

"Garapan Elementary School's MY WAVE members are composed of students from second to fifth grade. Regular club's meetings are held weekly on Thursdays and Fridays. Mrs. Ronaleen Joy Yumul is one of the latest additions to the club as one of the coordinators," she added.

MY WAVE Club's repertoire will include a medley of old-time favorites such as *Silent Night, Jingle Bell Rock,* to name a few. The members of MY WAVE Club have also prepared a special dance number for the crowd.

Christmas performances at the Hyatt happens every week. Everyone is invited; this is open to the public. For more information, call (670) 234-1234. Hyatt Regency Saipan is the first international hotel in the CNMI and is celebrating its 42nd anniversary in the CNMI. ***(Hyatt Regency Saipan)***

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Members the MY WAVE Club of Garapan Elementary School will be performing at the Hyatt Regency Saipan today starting at 5:30pm.

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
Bureau of Environmental and Coastal Quality
Division of Coastal Resources Management
P.O. Box 501304, Saipan, MP 96950
Tel: (670) 664-8300; Fax: (670) 664-8315
www.dcrm.gov.mp

Eli D. Cabrera, Administrator
Richard V. Salas, Director, DCRM

PUBLIC NOTICE

From the COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS COASTAL MANAGEMENT PROGRAM of the DIVISION OF COASTAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

DATE: December 23, 2022

NOTICE: The Bureau of Environmental and Coastal Quality (BECQ) Division of Coastal Resources Management (DCRM) is pleased to announce an Eco-Tour Operator Best Practices Course focused on tour and marine sports operators (MSOs). The course is tentatively scheduled to begin in January 2023. To register or view more information about the course, visit the DCRM website at: https://dcrm.gov.mp/current-projects/eco-tour-operator-best-practices-certification-program/.

The Eco-Tour Operator Best Practices Course (ECO-TO-BP) is a free course that educates and certifies MSOs on ways they could minimize their impact to beaches, water quality, and wildlife. The topics covered are Pollution, Health, and Safety; Corals and Marine Environment; and Rules and Regulations. The course and certification exam would take a total of eight hours to complete.

Registration is required and the schedule of sessions will be dependent on the availability of registrants for calendar year 2023 – 2024. If MSOs successfully complete the course and pass the certification exam, they become eligible for a 25% discount on their next watersports permit. The first class offering will be held on Wednesday, January 18, 2023.

DCRM encourages all MSOs to take advantage of this learning opportunity. Contact DCRM's Permitting Section or Planning Section with any questions or comments regarding the course, certification, or discount through 1 (670) 664-8300/24 or planning@dcrm.gov.mp or planning@dcrm.gov.mp.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS
Tel: (670) 664-2371 | Fax: (670) 664-2408 | Caller Box 10007, Saipan, MP 96950

INVITATION TO BID
ITB23-GOV/OPD--42300023

ATTORNEY GENERAL OFFICE RENOVATION IN SUSUPE

SUBMISSION DATE: 10:00 AM ChST JANUARY 13, 2023

Governor Ralph DLG. Torres, through the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) is soliciting sealed bids for the *Attorney General Office Renovation* in Susupe, Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI). This project will be funded by the 702 Covenant funding under the U.S. Department of Interior, Office of Insular Affairs.

The project package will be available in digital format only on **December 16, 2022** at the Capital Improvement Program Office, Office of the Governor, Juan A. Sablan Administration Building in Capitol Hill, Saipan, during regular working hours.

A Pre-Bid Conference will be held at the Attorney General's Office located in Susupe, Saipan, CNMI at **10:00 AM ChST December 29, 2022.** Proposers may also request to participate virtually via Zoom Meetings five (5) days prior to the meeting scheduled.

Questions regarding this ITB may be submitted via email to Ms. Nerissa B. Karakaya at nerissa.benavente@gov.mp no later than **4:30 PM ChST January 4, 2023.** All Questions & Answers will be shared with all prospective bidders.

Bidders located outside of the CNMI must fill out and submit the Notice of Intent to Bid Form to the Director of Procurement Services no later than **10:00 AM ChST, January 13, 2023.**

THE PROVISIONS OF THE CNMI PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAC SECTION 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3-730 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, KICKBACKS, AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.

THE CNMI GOVERNMENT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY AND ALL BIDS, OR PORTIONS THEREOF, AND WAIVE IMMATERIAL DEFECTS IF TO DO SO WOULD BE IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE CNMI GOVERNMENT.

/s/ Ralph DLG. Torres
Governor, CNMI

/s/ Francisco C. Aguon, Acting Director
CNMI Procurement Services

Opinion

Hafa Adai!
Saipan Tribune
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MEMBER

The Associated Press | Pacific Islands News Association

EDITORIAL

Criminal referrals for Trump are a historic move against a historically bad president

On Dec. 19, 2020, Donald Trump, still refusing to accept he had lost the election, invited his supporters to the nation's capital.

"Big protest in D.C. on January 6th," he wrote in a now-infamous tweet. "Be there, will be wild!"

Exactly two years later, the House select committee investigating the Jan. 6 attack on the U.S. Capitol urged the Justice Department to pursue criminal charges against the former president for what was unarguably an attempted coup.

It was the culmination of the committee's year-and-a-half-long investigation into Trump's vast efforts to overturn the results of the 2020 election. The committee recommended that Trump be charged with four crimes, which include inciting or assisting an insurrection and conspiracy to defraud the United States.

"We have gone where the facts and the law lead us, and inescapably, they lead us here," Rep. Jamie Raskin, one of the committee's nine members, said at Monday's meeting.

While it isn't a legally binding move—the Justice Department has no obligation to heed the committee's recommendations—it's still a hugely meaningful one. Never before has Congress recommended that a former president be charged with a crime, let alone with thwarting the peaceful transition of power.

The Jan. 6 committee hearings were never meant to be a court of law. They have been a court of public scrutiny and evidence, meant to emphasize the moral failings of Trump and his allies at least as much as any potential criminal acts.

Through unnerving revelations and gripping testimony, the hearings have forced Americans to remember something that Republicans desperately want us to forget. Two years after the 2020 election, we're still talking about it. That matters. The most recent election, in which several high-profile election deniers lost, shows that it matters to wary Americans.

The committee has sought to pin responsibility for the Jan. 6 insurrection directly on Donald Trump, and for good reason. It was Trump who decided he had won the 2020 election before it even occurred. It was Trump who immediately began pushing false allegations of voter fraud despite knowing that none existed. It was he who pursued every legal and illegal avenue he could think of to sway the outcome in his favor. And when thousands of Trump supporters descended on the U.S. Capitol, seeking to interfere with the electoral count, he did nothing to stop it. It was, after all, exactly what he wanted.

Just as importantly, however, the committee has also emphasized that Trump didn't act alone—the ongoing threat to democracy is larger than just one man.

There are many different types of accountability. There's legal accountability, the kind that the committee is recommending. We hope the Justice Department chooses to pursue charges against Trump and his allies (including, perhaps, North Carolina's very own Mark Meadows), because nobody is above the law. But there's also accountability to the people you serve—the most basic tenet of democracy. We hope Americans don't forget who failed them.

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We're dreaming of a green Christmas

TOGETHER, WE CAN

By ROBERTA GUERRERO
Special to the Saipan Tribune

Roberta Guerrero is the executive director of the Mariana Islands Nature Alliance. A proud resident of Saipan with a heart for volunteerism, Guerrero passionately serves the Marianas to preserve and protect the islands' environment for generations to come.

The days leading up to Christmas are exciting and full of anticipation about celebrations and sharing love and joy with family and friends. Preparing for this wonderful time includes planning meals, decorating homes, and fulfilling Christmas wish lists. The team at Mariana Islands Nature Alliance looks at the holidays from a sustainable lens and imagines how Mother Earth would recommend we celebrate a "Green Christmas."

1. Quality Over Quantity: When buying gifts, consider buying fewer items of better quality. Investing time into picking quality items that will last a long time reduces the chances of gifts going to waste. This also can be better for your wallet. Also, consider gifting experiences for your loved ones. This will reduce the demand for physical resources and bring your loved ones together through the gift of time and shared memorable experiences.

There are many options to purchase gifts or experiences from local businesses that will reduce your Christmas footprint, such as waterpark passes; coupons or gift certificates for your favorite restaurants; tickets for a family night at the movies; or gift certificates for local retailers where your loved ones can choose the perfect gift.

2. Think about materials: Look at the materials that the gifts are made from and keep sustainability in mind. Try to avoid plastic items that can't be recycled and look for organic-certified food, clothing, or wooden toys. Table manners matter, so avoid using plastic tablecloths where possible. Instead, use fabric tablecloths and napkins that can be reused. If cloth isn't an option, cover your buffet tables with colorful butcher paper, banana leaves, or young coconut tree fronds. Avoid using Styrofoam plates and plastic cutlery and use more sustainable options like paper plates and wooden chopsticks. Don't forget to bring your reusable shopping bags every time you shop.

3. Avoid glitter: Glittery paper and décor look beautiful, but they contain microplastics. Choose compostable wrapping paper instead. If you haven't already started this practice, save and reuse ribbons from previous years, and you'll never run out! Rather than paper cards, consider themed Christmas photos and e-cards that you can keep forever.

4. Don't Forget the Tree!: If buying a plastic Christmas tree, make sure that you're going to reuse it for years to follow. If buying a fresh tree, think of ways to dispose of it once the season is over by turning it into compost or wood chips. A potted tree is a good solution as you can reuse it each year or replant it.

5. Think about your lights: More people are switching to LED lights on their Christmas trees. LED options use less energy, last longer, and look just as good. Also, switch off your lights during the day and before going to bed. It's safer and will reduce your energy consumption.

6. Take out what you bring in: Many family gatherings are spent enjoying the islands' natural beauty and resources at the beach. Remember that each piece of plastic that enters the ocean will eventually enter our food stream. Bring everything that will make your celebration fun, but remember to pack trash bags and take everything you brought to the celebration back home with you. Plastic bottles, aluminum cans, and cardboard should be collected separately and brought to the transfer station at Lower Base for recycling.

7. Home visits from Niño Jésus (Baby Jesus): With the resumption of the holiday tradition of visitations by the Niño Jésus to homes around the islands, think about giving the carolers homemade treats or fruits rather than wrapped candies.

MINA is a melting pot of people from all walks of life, creeds, and ethnicities, but one thing that we can all embrace is that Christmas and the coming New Year are times for us to release negativity and spread cheer, positivity, and good vibes. Let's reflect on the values that we embrace as a community: friendship, generosity, perseverance, forgiveness, compassion, and respect for each other and our environment.

MINA celebrates a Green Christmas yearround by practicing and promoting environmental stewardship. Join us! For more tips, images, and stories about our projects, visit us on Facebook (@MINAPACIFIC), Instagram (@minaoutreach), and our website (minapacific.org).

For more information about the GCEA's programs, visit the Council's website at cnmieconomy.com, engage with them on Facebook and Instagram (@cnmigov.economy), or contact them at gceacnmi@gmail.com.

EDITORIAL POLICY Letters to the editor must include the NAME, VILLAGE ADDRESS, and CONTACT NUMBER of the contributor. Letters that do not have these information will immediately be trashed. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

Half-breed culture

MY GLASS CUP

By JIM RAYPHAND
Special to the Saipan Tribune

Jim Rayphand is a former executive director of the Northern Marianas Protection and Advocacy Systems Inc. and has recently ventured into a startup fishing business.

Note: Adapted from an article I wrote, "Culture Shock: American Islanders at St. Anne's Belfield," which was previously published in my high school magazine, PERSPECTIVES, in the summer of 2009.

I graduated from a small high school, St. Anne's Belfield (STAB), in Charlottesville, Virginia (yes, that Charlottesville) a little over 30 years ago. In spite of recent national news about racially charged events in Charlottesville, that town (my town) is forever etched on my mind as a very special place with some of the most brilliant and kind people I have ever had the pleasure of knowing. And yes, we have racism there like everywhere else and "We all should rise above the clouds of ignorance, narrowness, and selfishness" (Booker T. Washington).

Before moving to Charlottesville, I lived with my paternal grandparents on our home island of Lukunor, a small atoll (I'd guess two miles long and less than a half-mile wide) on the easternmost edge of the Mortlock islands (among the "outer islands" of Chuuk). Our parents sent us (my siblings and I) to live there while they moved to America for law school. So began my life of immersion in our respective cultural heritage—on one side a seafaring, warrior nation of Pacific islanders and on the other a Virginia breed of confederate gentlemen and proper southern belles—you could not script a cultural juxtaposition of more complex proportions.

Putting aside the obvious differences of the day-to-day amenities like running water and electricity, of which we had none on Lukunor, or the oddity of being raised among non-English speakers to being cocooned by only-English speakers and surrounded by miles of ocean on every side, to suddenly being landlocked in Charlottesville, the cultural differences were far more shocking than I may have ever let on. I was determined from as early as my initial arrival in Virginia to stake my claim as an American despite the unnerving sensation of culture shock.

To name a few more differences, the nuclear family style of living was completely foreign to me, because for as long as I could remember, I was constantly surrounded by people from all reaches of my family line. I could not comprehend the separation between "immediate family" and "extended family"—at that point in my life there was no difference between the two. As an example, we don't even have a word for cousin in Mortlockese, so we simply say brother or sister and have to describe it when translating English as a person "in the line of brother or sister"; the same is true for uncles and aunts, translated as person "in the line of father or mother." Additionally, the pervasive sense of equality between men and women was absolutely odd in my view—call that what you will. To illustrate, my teenage years were marked by some dramatic differences in how the women in my family were expected and began to treat me. Specifically, my sisters/female cousins could not stand or walk by me if I was sitting down and if they had to, for whatever reason, move past me they did so walking on their knees—some of the older ladies would just ask me to stand up first. My late grandmother insisted that the girls learn this custom, which is meant as an expression of respect for all men—a holdover from a time when all men were expected to serve as literal protectors and providers in a place where stores, money, and the police (much more the "woke police") were irrelevant.

To be clear, our women's customs of respect were never about blind subservience to an entitled breed of phallic men; in fact, it is only part and parcel of the bigger picture in a matrilineal society wherein our clan's lineage actually follows the woman and, truth be told, when all is said and done, the women more often than not have the last word. Unfortunately the true cultural, if not symbiotic, relationship spawned with mutual respect between our men and women has been so badly misunderstood or rather misinterpreted such that we have generations of boys (wannabe-men) with no sense of responsibility for the well-being of anyone but themselves, who think their jingle balls and pee shooters (well-endowed or otherwise) automatically and eternally entitles them to a level of respect without ever having left the comforts of their mothers' bosom.

For us it was customary for boys at a certain age to transition out of the house (where the women and children sleep), and into the men's house. Yes, we had and still have men's houses on our islands—houses where boys get real-life training in life-sustaining skills such as fighting techniques, fishing, or navigating secrets, and even the magical art of speaking with and courting women—an island boy's right-of-passage so to speak. Of course, I moved away from the islands prior to grasping any of the above subjects.

We, meaning the youngest of the men, were subjected to strict conditions and sometimes outright beatings by the alpha males (our uncles and such) for a range of infractions, of which none were considered more egregious than a show of weakness or fear—heaven forbid you should cry in the men's house or speak back to an elder. The idea was and is that men are bred for strength and physical labor through a kind of blind obedience toward any man on a higher rung than their own (another largely misinterpreted custom today). It remains a great source of embarrassment for families whose men are ever afraid to fight, are too weak for physical labor, or exhibit anything but unconditional respect for their elders. The rod was never spared for love of a child.

Sometime thereafter, my siblings and I would move to Charlottesville for school. I realized rather quickly that my islander training, although not obsolete, was certainly out of place. For one thing, fighting was not condoned. For another, and without question the most life-altering concept I gained through my time in Charlottesville (by way of STAB), was an honor code—not the roughneck code of honor I had come to understand, but a simple credo that says, "I will not lie, cheat, or steal." We were taught to revere the honor code and we were asked to be polite at all times; we were asked to be kind and courteous in word and action; we were asked to listen with care and thoughtfulness; we were asked to take pride in ourselves; and we were asked to care about our community at large. Generally, we were educated with a sense and sensibility that I could hardly comprehend. Evidence of these teachings would not be measured in rubrics, but rather, we would hear it in the whispered truths about our experiences in and around our respective communities throughout the remainder of our lives.

I'd like to believe the vast spectrum of my cultural roots serves me well and has perhaps given further credence to something Mahatma Gandhi said that, "Our ability to reach unity in diversity will be the beauty and the test of our civilization."

In short, life deals us apples and oranges—some days we bite right in and chomp it all the way to the core; other days, we need to peel off the skin, split it open and take it in one piece at a time. We feed off the trees and, though the seasons may change, the ripened fruits of our lives are forever sweet.

The spies who deserve to be out in the cold

By RICH LOWRY
© 2022 by King Features Synd., Inc.

Rich Lowry is editor of the National Review.

The "Twitter Files" released by Elon Musk give us a more fine-grained understanding of how and why the social media company decided to censor the Hunter Biden laptop story.

This was a woefully stupid decision. The New York Post's account was suspended for two weeks for the offense of coming up with a scoop that we are still talking about and that will surely play a large role in upcoming GOP investigations into Biden family corruption.

That's the kind of thing that newspapers should get awards for; Twitter thought it should get punished for it.

But the Twitter officials caught up in the progressive bubble that caused them to censor first, ask questions later—all in the name of "safety," of course—weren't the most blameworthy actors in this episode.

That dishonor belongs to the former intelligence officials who put out a widely cited, deliberately misleading letter suggesting that the Hunter Biden laptop was Russian disinformation. It muddied the discussion over the laptop and gave President Joe Biden a handy tool to try to deflect the laptop story.

These former officials knew what they were doing, traded on their public service for a tawdry political purpose, and have by and large demonstrated no remorse.

Even the former head of trust and safety at Twitter—who sounds like he just came from a sit-in at a university president's office demanding the disinvitation of a right-wing speaker from campus—has said Twitter shouldn't have suppressed the Hunter Biden story.

Amazingly, the former officials, once entrusted with some of the most sensitive powers and roles in the U.S. government, aren't as responsible and accountable as a social-media functionary from woke central casting. As a sheer matter of public accountability, their disgraceful performance should be one focus of House Republican investigators beginning in January.

More than 50 former intelligence officials signed the letter, including five former CIA directors or acting directors. Biden cited the letter in a debate with Donald Trump. "There are," he said, "50 former national intelligence folks who said that what ... he's accusing me of is a Russian plant."

That statement was strictly true; it just didn't hold the significance that Biden hoped the average listener would assume. When Trump derisively noted that Biden sounded like he was saying that the laptop was another Russian hoax, Biden doubled down: "That's exactly what we're told."

Of course, we all know that there's no way Biden heard about the laptop with all its tawdry and comprising information and thought, "No, that's not my boy—must be the insidious work of an extremely adept, undetected Russian spy network trying to influence the election."

Now that multiple other news outlets have confirmed the legitimacy of the laptop, the letter-writers haven't repented about themselves spreading clever disinformation meant to influence the election. They've fallen back on a Jesuitical defense of their handiwork.

And, indeed, the letter-writers played a game. They didn't actually say that the Hunter Biden laptop story was disinformation, at the same time they created that impression. This has given them plausible—or more accurately, implausible—deniability.

Cornered about the letter on Fox News, former CIA officer David Priess said that the laptop story, just as the letter asserted, had "all the classic earmarks" of Russian disinformation. That didn't mean it was disinformation, just that it had the earmarks.

That's not how the letter was promoted at the time, though. Nick Shapiro, a prime mover behind the missive and a former top aide under CIA director John Brennan, told Politico, "The real power here however is the number of former, working-level IC officers who want the American people to know that once again the Russians are interfering."

No weasel words there. And the press coverage leaned heavily on the suspicions of the intelligence officials, not their lawyerly caveats.

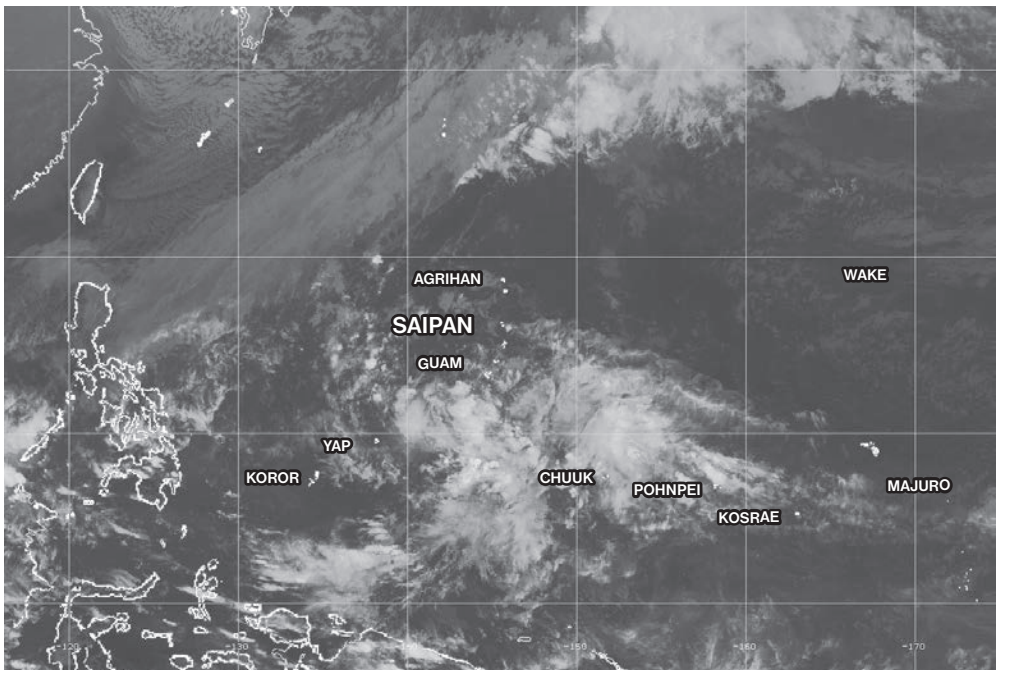
Even more than the former management of Twitter, the letter-writers have shown they never should be trusted again.

The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN

TODAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY
Occasional showers and possibly a thunderstorm.	Showers likely and possibly a thunderstorm. Cloudy	Showers likely and possibly a thunderstorm. Mostly cloudy	A chance of showers. Partly sunny	A chance of showers. Partly sunny
86º 77º	86º 77º	86º 77º	86º 77º	86º 77º

YESTERDAY'S SATELLITE IMAGE



PICTURE TIME: 8:48 AM, THURSDAY, DECEMBER 22, 2022

Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

Satellite and radar imagery showed isolated showers over the Marianas this morning. A wet weather pattern will prevail over the local area through the holiday weekend.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

MICRONESIA		▲ ▼ °F
Guam and Rota	Thunderstorms	86° / 79°
Palau	Cloudy	87° / 78°
Yap	Thunderstorms	86° / 79°
Chuuk	Partly Cloudy	85° / 80°
Pohnpei	Thunderstorms	86° / 78°
Kosrae	Scattered Thunderstorms	86° / 78°
Majuro	Thunderstorms	85° / 80°

DAY	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Today	6:38 AM	5:52 PM
Saturday	6:39 AM	5:53 PM
Sunday	6:39 AM	5:53 PM
Monday	6:40 AM	5:54 PM
Tuesday	6:40 AM	5:54 PM

DAY	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Today	5:19 AM	5:03 PM	-
Saturday	6:21 AM	5:55 PM	-
Sunday	7:27 AM	6:53 PM	-
Monday	8:34 AM	7:57 PM	-
Tuesday	9:39 AM	9:04 PM	-

AROUND THE GLOBE		▲ ▼ °F
Auckland	Partly Cloudy	75° / 63°
Beijing	Partly Cloudy	43° / 21°
Hong Kong	Mostly Sunny	73° / 63°
Honolulu	Mostly Sunny	79° / 64°
London	Showers	55° / 34°
Los Angeles	Sunny	78° / 50°
Manila	Partly Cloudy	90° / 75°
Melbourne	Rain	73° / 52°
Miami	Mostly Sunny	81° / 72°
New York	Partly Cloudy	50° / 34°
Osaka	Mostly Sunny	55° / 45°
Paris	Partly Cloudy	43° / 36°
Busan	Mostly Sunny	54° / 30°
Rome	Sunny	57° / 41°
Salem	Cloudy	52° / 39°
San Francisco	Sunny	60° / 45°
Seoul	Mostly Sunny	39° / 19°
Tokyo	Mostly Sunny	54° / 39°
Washington, DC	Partly Cloudy	48° / 33°

TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY		FEET
01:11 AM	Low Tide	-0.79
08:26 AM	High Tide	1.81
1:33 PM	Low Tide	1.15
6:28 PM	High Tide	1.89

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FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF NOVEMBER 1, 2022

DEPARTURES

SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)

UA117	9:50AM	10:35AM	Daily

SAIPAN- NARITA (NRT)

UA824	7:05AM	9:45AM	1, 3, 5

GUAM-MANILA (MNL)

PR 111	6:00AM	7:45AM	Daily
UA193	7:55PM	11:50PM	2, 5 via Palau
UA183	8:00PM	9:50PM	Daily

SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)

UA117/183	9:50AM	9:50PM	Daily via Guam
UA117/193	9:50AM	11:50PM	2, 5 via Guam, Palau
OZ624/701	3:40PM	10:35AM+1	3,6 via Incheon

SAIPAN-INCHEON (ICN)

OZ624	3:40PM	7:40PM	3, 6
TW308	4:30PM	8:20PM	3, 4, 6, 7
7C3405	4:35PM	8:25PM	Daily

SAIPAN-BUSAN (PUS)

BX621	3:10PM	6:30PM	3, 7

ARRIVALS

GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN

UA174	8:00AM	8:46AM	Daily

NARITA (NRT)-SAIPAN

UA825	9:25PM	2:00AM+1	2, 4, 7

MANILA (MNL)-GUAM

PR110	10:05PM	3:55AM+1	Daily
UA184	10:55PM	4:45AM+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7
UA192	10:40PM	6:30AM+1	2, 5 via Palau
UA184	12:40AM	6:30AM	3, 6

MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN

UA189/174	12:40AM	8:46AM+1	3, 6 via Guam
UA184/174	10:55PM	8:46AM+1	1, 3, 4, 6,7 via Guam
UA192/174	10:40PM	8:46AM+1	2, 5 via Palau, Guam
OZ704/623	11:50PM	2:40PM+1	2, 5 via Incheon

INCHEON (ICN)-SAIPAN

OZ623	9:00AM	2:40PM	3, 6
TW307	10:00AM	3:30PM	3, 4, 6, 7
7C3406	10:10AM	3:30PM	Daily

BUSAN (PUS)-SAIPAN

BX622	8:00AM	1:10PM	3, 7

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); UA United Airlines; PR, Philippine Airlines; TW, T'Way Air; OZ, Asiana Airlines; 7C, Jeju Air; BX, Air Busan • ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. *(The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)*

MARIANAS SOUTHERN AIRWAYS

INITIAL DAILY FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF AUGUST 18, 2022

SAIPAN TO TINIAN

DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
7:00 A.M.	7:15 A.M.	(Except Sundays)
9:50 A.M.	10:05 A.M.	
4:00 P.M.	4:15 P.M.	(Except Saturdays)

TINIAN TO SAIPAN

DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
7:35 A.M.	7:50 A.M.	(Except Sundays)
10:25 A.M.	10:40 A.M.	
4:35 P.M.	4:50 P.M.	(Except Saturdays)

SAIPAN TO ROTA

DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
8:10 A.M.	8:40 A.M.	
1:45 P.M.	2:15 P.M.	

ROTA TO SAIPAN

DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
9:00 A.M.	9:30 A.M.	
2:35 P.M.	3:05 P.M.	

SAIPAN TO GUAM

DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
11:10 A.M.	12:00 P.M.	
5:15 P.M.	6:05 P.M.	

GUAM TO SAIPAN

DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
12:30 P.M.	1:20 P.M.	
6:40 P.M.	7:30 P.M.	

STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF JUNE 1, 2022

SAIPAN TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
1301	8:30	9:00	Daily
1302	11:00	11:30	Mon/Wed/Fri
1302	12:00	12:30	Tues/Thurs/Sat/Sun
1303	15:30	16:00	Daily

ROTA TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
3101	9:30	10:00	Daily
3102	13:00	13:30	Tues/Thurs/Sat/Sun
3102	14:00	14:30	Mon/Wed/Fri
3103	16:30	17:00	Daily

ROTA TO GUAM

LIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
3401	12:00	12:30	Mon/Wed/Fri

GUAM TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
4301	13:00	13:30	Mon/Wed/Fri

SAIPAN TO TINIAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
1202	8:00	8:15	Daily
1203	9:00	9:15	Daily
1204	10:00	10:15	Daily
1208	14:00	14:15	Daily
1209	15:00	15:15	Daily
1210	16:00	16:15	Daily
1211	17:00	17:15	Daily

TINIAN TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
2102	8:30	8:45	Daily
2103	9:30	9:45	Daily
2104	10:30	10:45	Daily
2108	14:30	14:45	Daily
2109	15:30	15:45	Daily
2110	16:30	16:45	Daily
2111	17:30	17:45	Daily

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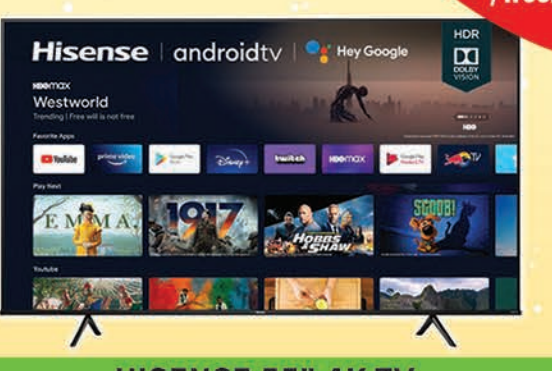

HISENSE 55" 4K TV

*This is a rent to own transaction. You don't own the product until all rental payments are completed. Example: $9.95 x 12 months= $517.40. Items may differ. Some restrictions apply, see store for details.

NO CREDIT CHECKS Middle Road 234-RENT | Chalan Kanoa 234-DIAL DIAL Rent-to-Own

FCC RELEASES NATIONAL BROADBAND MAP

CNMI Broadband verifying data for NMI residents

The Federal Communications Commission released its new FCC National Broadband Map, at https://broadbandmap.fcc.gov/home on Nov. 19, 2022. On the heels of that release, CNMI Broadband is announcing that it has completed its initial review of the map data for the CNMI territory. As a result of that review, CNMI Broadband is determined to make sure that households and businesses that were clearly missed upon the initial release of the map are properly counted, and to challenge connection data in locations where it may not be accurate.

CNMI Broadband is a project of the CNMI Office of Planning and Development. "…This map represents a significant amount of effort on the part of our partners at the FCC, as well as a big chore for our commercial network service providers, who had to work with new software and tight deadlines to submit their data. In many respects, this map is a landmark in public data collection and dissemination, and we encourage residents to visit the link to see it for themselves," said A. Kodep Ogumoro-Uludong, OPD director.

"That being said, we need to make sure that the facts on the ground are being accurately represented. Somewhat like a census, there will be a component of our federal broadband infrastructure funding that will be based upon the data. There is a huge race going on with all the states to get the largest possible share of the funding, and we need to keep up in that race by counting everybody we can," added Ogumoro-Uludong.

The FCC National Broadband Map is part of the federal government's implementation of Broadband for All programming tied to the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and its statutory funding rules for internet service to residents throughout America. According to the website, "This map displays where Internet services are available across the United States, as reported by Internet Service Providers to the FCC." A formal challenge process is available to residents by using the data portal, and broadband offices such as CNMI Broadband have a second "bulk challenge" mechanism in order to submit lists of data. Several key deadlines for challenge data have been set out by the federal government, the first of which is set for January 2023.

"Many of the places we are looking to correct are in remote areas," said Peter Dresslar, senior adviser for Broadband and Digital Equity at OPD. "There are areas around Marpi and along Route 36 that seem to be missing numerous households. And then we have Tinian and Rota with some gaps in coverage, not to mention the Northern Islands, which the maps completely ignore. Even though the Northern Islands are remote, they still deserve to be counted and recognized on this map, and we will make sure that happens. We'll be using statistical analysis, comparative satellite map reviews, and we are also immediately sending out a team to verify the data on the ground where needed."

CNMI Broadband also convened a meeting of the Broadband Offices of the Pacific Territories to discuss common mapping problems with the broadband teams from Guam and American Samoa. According to CNMI Gov. Ralph DLG Torres. "The Office of Planning and Development was designed from the start to be built on partnerships, and CNMI Broadband's continued leadership in the Pacific is a great example of that approach."

Residents with questions about their location on the maps may contact CNMI Broadband by using the contact form on the website at opd.gov.mp/internet. ***(PR)***

WISHING YOU AND YOUR FAMILIES
a blessed Christmas!
Our family wishes you and yours a Christmas
rich with family love, warm with friendship and blessed with the joys of the holiday season.
And our best wishes for a new year happy with good health and prosperity.
Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!
Kilili, Andrea and family
Paid for by Kilili for Congress

MTEC, MVA visit Dandan, Kagman, Da'ok schools

The Marianas Tourism Education Council and Marianas Visitors Authority are continuing their annual school presentations about tourism, recently visiting several middle schools and high schools on Saipan

MTEC and the MVA aim to visit all public schools with the message, "Tourism is Everybody's Business," this year targeting 10th, 7th, and 4th graders.

"Although our message is similar at every school, we also encourage the students to express their opinions or bring up related topics of interest," said MVA board member Catherine Perry, who made the presentations with MVA Community Projects specialist Jack Aranda. "For example, students of Dandan Middle School asked a lot of questions we normally don't cover. Students at Da'ok Academy were attentive, and one student even agreed to help deliver the presentation about the work of the MVA. Chacha Oceanview Middle School responded enthusiastically to our questions for them, and Kagman High raised issues like blighted properties that are an eyesore for our destination. It's an opportunity for MTEC and the MVA to see what young people already know and what they think about their tourism industry."

MTEC

Marianas Visitors Authority Community Projects specialist Jack Aranda, front left, and Marianas Tourism Education Council board member Catherine Perry, front right, share about the Marianas tourism industry with 7th graders at Chacha Oceanview Middle School on Dec. 14, 2022, in Kagman, Saipan.

MTEC

Marianas Tourism Education Council board member Catherine Perry shares about the Marianas tourism industry with 7th graders at Dandan Middle School on Nov. 29, 2022, in Dandan, Saipan. MTEC and the Marianas Visitors Authority are aiming to visit every public school this school year.

The presentations provide a general overview of the Marianas tourism industry, how students benefit from the industry, and how they can help support tourism even at a young age.

The presentation also details the divisions and programs of the MVA in promoting The Marianas.

Other MTEC board members are acting chairwoman Vicky Benavente, Martin Duenas (MVA), Dr. Galvin Guerrero (Northern Marianas College), Larry Lee, Naomi Nishimura (CNMI Public School System), Glenn Policare (Kanoa Resort Saipan), and Gordon Marciano (PDI). Dr. Yunzi Zhang of Northern Marianas College School of Business also volunteers with the council. ***(MTEC)***

Happy Holidays

MARIANAS COFFEE

Marianas Strong Since 2004

Marianas Coffee wants to thank all its customers and businesses for supporting our locally roasted coffee products here on Saipan.

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Joeten Stores
ABC Stores
Brabu Pharmacy
Himawari Saipan
LJ's Market

Restaurants & Bars

Godfather's Bar
Java Joes
Marianas Creations
Island Café
Mango Six Café

We kindly ask you to support and use these fine establishments for their excellent service and commitment to local brands.

Thank You,
David Hood
& TEAM

Merry Christmas & Happy Holidays

As we celebrate the holiday season, I would like to extend my warm wishes to all in the CNMI. May this holiday season bring everyone an abundance of blessings, good fortune, and joy, as we look to the future of the Marianas with hopes for our continued prosperity. Your continued support and cooperation throughout the past few years is sincerely appreciated, and we wish you well-deserved rest and time with family this season. Thank you for yet another amazing year, all our accomplishments wouldn't have been possible without each and every one of you.

Once again, we hope you have a blessed, Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays, Marianas!

– Governor Ralph DLG. Torres & Family

MAY THE SPIRIT OF CHRISTMAS BRING YOU
AND YOUR FAMILY HOPE, HAPPINESS AND LOVE.
Merry Christmas
and a
Happy New Year!
From the Office of Senate President
Jude Untalan Hofschneider
and the Members of the 22nd Senate
Commonwealth Legislature and Staff

Food and health agents from Micronesia learn national regulations at UOG food safety training

UNIVERSITY OF GUAM COOPERATIVE EXTENSION & OUTREACH

Peter Barcinas, interim associate director of the Cooperative Extension & Outreach service at the University of Guam, welcomes food safety professionals from the other islands of Micronesia to a food safety training delivered by the University of Guam and the University of Idaho from Dec. 13–16.

Training on the latest national food safety requirements made its way to the islands of Micronesia this week via a U.S. Department of Agriculture National Institute of Food and Agriculture–funded program hosted by the University of Guam and the University of Idaho.

The four-day training brought 14 public health agents, food safety educators, and land-grant extension agents to Guam from Palau, the Marshall Islands, and the islands of Yap, Pohnpei, Kosrae, and Chuuk in the Federated States of Micronesia to learn about food safety practices to prevent foodborne illnesses.

Foodborne diseases are a significant public health issue across the Western Pacific, according to the World Health Organization, yet few food safety professionals in the region have had access to appropriate resources, including training on the national Food Safety Modernization Act.

Extension food-safety specialist Jang Ho Kim of the University of Idaho, who previously worked with Cooperative Research, Extension, and Education Services at Northern Marianas College on Saipan, is the director of the grant program, titled "Customized Food Safety Education Strategy for Hard-to-Reach Audiences in the Western Pacific Islands."

"This is a training for agriculture and extension agents, and then they will go out and teach and provide food safety information for their people, like farmers and processors," he said.

The participants said there is a general lack of awareness about the importance of food safety on their islands. One shared how high electricity costs prompt residents of Kosrae to turn off their refrigerators overnight, increasing the risk of food contamination.

"I'm excited to bring back the training materials and try to tailor fit it to what we practice back home, especially in the hospital because that's where we serve the most vulnerable people," said Steward Molens, a nutritionist at Pohnpei State Hospital.

Joining Kim in delivering the training were UOG food scientist Jian Yang; director of the Food Technology Center at the University of Idaho Joshua Bevan; and Douglas Marshall, chief scientific officer for Eurofins Microbiology Laboratories Inc. out of Colorado.

"You're the future of the food system in Guam and Micronesia," Peter Barcinas, interim associate director of UOG's extension service, said to the participants. "I hope that as you look at your food system and the credentialing of the people that support your institutional markets, you'll think of us and future training that's ahead and take advantage of any capacity building like this and look to your partners for support." ***(UOG)***

Merry Christmas

AND

HAPPY NEW YEAR

FROM THE MANAGEMENT & STAFF OF

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS
MUSEUM
OF HISTORY & CULTURE

DANNY AQUINO
Executive Director

JAMES I. MACARANAS
Facilities & Building Manager

ARCHIE P. AJOSTE
Administrative Assistant/Certified Docent

WENNY HARUO
Office Assistant

MESSAGE FROM MAYOR DAVID MUNDO APATANG ON CHRISTMAS DAY

This Christmas season, we give our deepest gratitude to all of our active service members, first responders, frontline essential workers, all those who are on call and serving throughout the holidays, and to all of you who have made a lasting contribution to keep our home safe and peaceful. The greatest blessings we have received as a community are the people who care about our fellow citizens and island. Together, we have accomplished great thingsand we do the same in the years to come. This Christmas, we must give thanks to our blessings, forgive and be compassionate to one another as we look forward to the new year. We extend our warmest regards and best wishes to everyone. May the spirit of this wonderful season be with you and your loved ones. We thank you all from the bottom of our hearts.

Merry Christmas MARIANAS!

DAVID M. APATANG
MAYOR OF SAIPAN AND STAFF

Business

ViVi's Shopee specializes in holiday-themed decor

MARK RABAGO

ViVi's Shopee is located on the first floor of the white building across Dial Rent to Own in Chalan Kanoa.

By MARK RABAGO
mark_rabago@saipantribune.com
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Opening only last July, ViVi's Shopee in Chalan Kanoa specializes in holiday-themed home decor.

Currently, the store is having a Christmas promotion where all items are 10%-20% off.

MARK RABAGO

ViVi's Shopee sells home decoration ornaments, garden decoration ornaments, home storage, and some vintage home ornaments.

Vivian Lyu, who owns the store and is who the store is named after, said opening a shop like ViVi's Shopee has always been her dream.

"My shop opened in July this year. Personally, I like home decoration very much. So I always dreamed of opening a unique home decoration store."

ViVi's Shopee currently sells home decoration ornaments, garden decoration ornaments, home storage, and some vintage home ornaments.

While ViVi's Shopee looks like the North Pole right now with the preponderance of Christmas decor, Lyu said the display actually changes depending on the upcoming holiday.

"The shop not only sells holiday decorations, but also some garden decorations, sculpture ornaments, and decorative furniture so it's really a home decoration store. We will also introduce home decorations with holiday-related themes according to the corresponding festivals," said Lyu.

Lyu assured that items sold at ViVi's Shopee are unique items she actually personally prefers and not found in other stores in the CNMI.

MARK RABAGO

The store is named after Vivian Lyu, ViVi's Shopee owner.

"Everything in the shop is purchased by myself. It's not a large-scale purchase. I hope every item has its own characteristics and is not repeated. I hope beautiful home decorations can bring more joy to everyone's life," she said.

ViVi's Shopee is located on the first floor of the white building across Dial Rent to Own in Chalan Kanoa. They're open from Monday to Saturday, 11am-6pm, and Sundays, 11am-5pm.

For more information about ViVi's Shopee, call 670-287-9688, email vivishopeesaipan@gmail.com, or go to their Facebook page.

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS
CNMI GOVERNMENT

INVITATION TO BID
DPW23-ITB NO. 42300024

SUBMISSION DATE: JANUARY 09, 2023 TIME: 09:00 A.M.

"Commercial office space for the Secretary's office, Division of Building Safety Code and Division of Technical Services of the Department of Public Works"

COPIES OF THE SPECIFICATIONS MAY BE OBTAINED ON THE MUNIS VENDOR SELF SERVICE PORTAL (https://selfservice.dof.gov.mp/vss/) OR AT THE OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT SERVICES, LOCATED AT HORIGUCHI BLDG, GROUND FLOOR, 123 KOPPA DI ORU & BEACH ROAD, GARAPAN, SAIPAN, DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

****FOR YOUR SAFETY & OURS: ALL INTERESTED INDIVIDUALS ARE REQUIRED TO USE A FACE MASK UPON ENTRY****

QUESTIONS REGARDING THIS ITB CAN BE MADE TO THE SECRETARY OF PUBLIC WORKS, JAMES A. ADA AT (670) 234-9828

THE PROVISIONS OF THE CNMI PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAC SECTION 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3-730 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, KICKBACKS AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.

THE CNMI GOVERNMENT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS, OR PORTIONS THEREOF, AND WAIVE IMMATERIAL DEFECTS IF TO DO SO WOULD BE IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE CNMI GOVERNMENT.

/S/ JAMES A. ADA
SECRETARY OF PUBLIC WORKS

/S/ FRANCISCO C. AGUON
ACTING DIRECTOR, P.S.

COMMONWEALTH UTILITIES CORPORATION
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

REQUEST FOR ARCHITECTURAL AND ENGINEERING SERVICES
CUC-RAESP-23-004

A&E Design Services for Tinian Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) and Collection System & Rota Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) and Collection System Preliminary Engineering Report

The Office of the Executive Director, Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC) is soliciting competitive sealed proposals from qualified Architectural and Engineering (A&E) firms for Preliminary Engineering Reports (PER) for a Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) and Collection System on Tinian and Rota. The services shall include preparation of the PER as per USDA RUS Bulletin 1780-2.

This project is funded by a grant from the United States Office of Insular Affairs, U.S. Department of Interior.

Prospective Proposers for this project must pre-register with the CUC Procurement & Supply Division via email to marcela.tenorio@cucgov.org. The RAESP package may be obtained from the CUC Procurement and Supply Office via email after registration.

One (1) original and Five (5) hard copies of the Proposal and One (1) original and five (5) hard copies of the Cost Proposal in a separate envelope must be submitted in a sealed envelope marked **"CUC-RAESP-23-004, A&E Services for Tinian Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) and Collection System & Rota Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) and Collection System – Preliminary Engineering Report",** to the CUC Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950, no later than **10:00 a.m., (ChST) on January 18, 2023. Late submissions and conditional proposals will not be considered.**

Discussions may be conducted with responsible proposers who submit proposal determined to be reasonably susceptible of being selected for award for the purpose of clarification and to ensure full understanding of and responsiveness to solicitation requirements. All proposers shall be accorded fair and equal treatment with respect to any opportunity for discussion. During discussions, there will be no disclosure of any information derived from the proposal submitted by competing proposers.

All proposers are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the proposers due to lack of information or understanding of the proposal requirements in the course of Consultant's preparation of a proposal under the contract. The RAESP does not commit CUC to award a contract, to pay any cost incurred in the preparation of the statement of qualifications under this request, or to procure or contract for services. Consultants are required to comply with all CNMI and applicable Federal Laws. This RAESP and the ensuing contract shall be executed as per the CUC Procurement Regulations.

All questions or requests for clarification will be entertained only from pre-registered prospective proposers and must be submitted in writing no later than **10:00 AM (ChST) on December 28, 2022** to Mr. Manny B. Sablan, CUC Purchasing Administrator, via email – manny.sablan@cucgov.org with a copy to Ms. Nicolette Villagomez, CUC Water/Wastewater, Engineer – via email, nicolette.villagomez@cucgov.org; Larry Manacop, CUC Acting Chief Engineer at email larry.manacop@cucgov.org and Marcela Tenorio, Administrative Technician Senior – via email marcela.tenorio@cucgov.org.

CUC reserves the right to reject any or all proposals and waive any imperfection in the proposal in the best interest of the government. All proposals shall become the property of CUC.

GARY P. CAMACHO
Executive Director

MANNY B. SABLAN
Purchasing Administrator

COMMONWEALTH UTILITIES CORPORATION
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

INVITATION FOR BID
CUC-IFB-23-012

Carbon Change Out of Granular Activated Carbon Filters (10 Sites)

The Office of the Executive Director, Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC) is soliciting competitive sealed bids from qualified firms for Carbon Change Out of Granular Activated Carbon Filters (10 Sites) in Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

The intent of the contract is for the Contractor to provide all labor, equipment, supplies, and materials necessary for the removal and installation of GAC and Gravel media replacement, disposal of spent GAC and Gravel media, possible sample collection, transportation, and the possible supply of gravel media, analyses of spent media, and additional waste containers/drums for disposal, if necessary. CUC requires the Project to be completed in 180 calendar days from date of award of contract.

The project is funded by the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021.

Prospective Bidders must pre-register with the CUC Procurement & Supply Division. The Bid Package may be obtained from the CUC Procurement and Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Saipan, between 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on government observed holidays, upon completion of registration and presentation of a receipt evidencing a non-refundable payment to the CUC Treasury Section, by cash, check or credit card in the amount of **$200.00** (non-refundable) for one IFB package set.

A Pre-Bid Conference followed by site visits will be held on **December 28, 2022 at 10:00 AM (ChST)** at the CUC Main Conference Room, 3rd Floor, Room No.17, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building.

One (1) original and Five (5) copies of the bid must be submitted in a sealed envelope marked "**CUC-IFB-23-012, Carbon Change Out of Granular Activated Carbon Filters (10 Sites)"** to the CUC Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950, no later than **10:00 AM (ChST) on January 17, 2023,** at which time they will be publicly opened and read aloud. Bids mailed via postal or courier service must be received on or before due date and time or post-marked before due date and time. Bid shall be submitted on the provided Bid Forms. Bidders are required to complete all Bid Forms. Bidders may supplement this form as appropriate. Bids will be required to be submitted under a condition of irrevocability for a period of 60 days after submission. **Late submissions and conditional bids will not be considered.**

A Bid Guarantee of not less than fifteen (15%) percent of the total bid price must accompany the bids. The security deposit may be in cash, certified check, cashier's check, or bid bond executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the Unites States Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety or other surety acceptable to the Attorney General. A Payment Bond of One Hundred (100%) percent and a Performance Bond of one hundred (100%) of the total bid price will be required upon the execution of the contract by the successful bidders. The payment and Performance bond must be executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety or other surety acceptable to the Attorney General. Surety Company must be authorized to do business in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

All insurers' questions, concerns and qualification shall be handled by the Department of Commerce Office of the Insurance Commissioner (OIC). The OIC is tasked with regulating and monitoring compliance to the CNMI's Insurance Code (Title 4, Division 7). Bidders are required to submit a clearance from the OIC certifying their insurer of choice is in compliance with the CNMI's Insurance Code.

Bidders are required to comply with all CNMI and applicable Federal Laws. This bid and the ensuing contract shall be executed pursuant to the CUC Procurement Regulations.

This Invitation for Bids does not commit CUC to the award of a contract or contracts, nor to pay any cost incurred in the preparation and submission of bids in anticipation of a contract. Bidders are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the bidders due to lack of information or understanding of the bid requirements in the course of Contractor's preparation of a bid under the contract.

Questions or requests for clarification will be entertained only from registered Proponents and must be submitted in writing no later than **10:00 a.m. (ChST) on January 4, 2023** to Manny B. Sablan, CUC Purchasing Administrator via email address manny.sablan@cucgov.org with a copy to Nicolette Villagomez, CUC Water/Wastewater Engineer via email address nicolette.villagomez@cucgov.org and to Christie Sablan, P&S, Senior Administrative Technician – christie.sablan@cucgov.org.

CUC reserves the right to reject any or all bids and waive any imperfection in the bid proposal in the best interest of the government. All bids shall become the property of CUC.

GARY P. CAMACHO
Executive Director

MANNY B. SABLAN
Purchasing Administrator

Merry Christmas
Warmest thoughts and best wishes for a wonderful Christmas. May peace, love, and prosperity follow you always.
50
One Boat, One Team, One Vision
ANNIVERSARY
Tan Holdings
HEALTH IS WEALTH
Tan Siu Lin Foundation

Nation

Jan. 6 panel prepares to unveil final report on insurrection

WASHINGTON (AP)—An 800-page report set to be released Thursday by House investigators will conclude that then-President Donald Trump criminally plotted to overturn his 2020 election defeat and "provoked his supporters to violence" at the Capitol with false claims of widespread voter fraud.

The resulting Jan. 6, 2021, insurrection of Trump's followers threatened democracy with "horrific" brutality toward law enforcement and "put the lives of American lawmakers at risk," according to the report's executive summary.

"The central cause of January 6th was one man, former President Donald Trump, who many others followed," reads the report from the House Jan. 6 committee, which is expected to be released in full on Thursday. "None of the events of January 6th would have happened without him."

Ahead of the report's release, the committee on Wednesday evening released 34 transcripts from the 1,000 interviews it conducted over the last 18 months. Most of those released are of witnesses who invoked their Fifth Amendment right against self-incrimination.

The report's eight chapters of findings will largely mirror nine hearings this year that presented evidence from the private interviews and millions of pages of documents. They tell the story of Trump's extraordinary and unprecedented campaign to overturn his defeat and his pressure campaign on state officials, the Justice Department, members of Congress and his own vice president to change the vote.

A 154-page summary of the report released Monday detailed how Trump, a Republican, amplified the false claims on social media and in public appearances, encouraging his supporters to travel to Washington and protest Democrat Joe Biden's presidential election win. And how he told them to "fight like hell" at a huge rally in front of the White House that morning and then did little to stop the violence as they beat police, broke into the Capitol and sent lawmakers running for their lives.

It was a "multi-part conspiracy," the committee concludes.

The massive, damning report comes as Trump is running again for the presidency and also facing multiple federal investigations, including probes of his role in the insurrection and the presence of classified documents at his Florida estate. A House committee is expected to release his tax returns in the coming days — documents he has fought for years to keep private. And he has been blamed by Republicans for a worse-than-expected showing in the midterm elections, leaving him in his most politically vulnerable state since he won the 2016 election.

It is also a culmination of four years of a House Democratic majority that has spent much of its time and energy investigating Trump and that is ceding power to Republicans in two weeks. Democrats impeached Trump twice — both times he was acquitted by the Senate — and investigated his finances, his businesses, his foreign ties and his family.

But the Jan. 6 probe has been the most personal for the lawmakers, most of whom were in the Capitol when Trump's supporters stormed the building and interrupted the certification of Biden's victory.

While the lasting impact of the probes remains to be seen — most Republicans have stayed loyal to the former president — the committee's hearings were watched by tens of millions of people over the summer. And 44% of voters in November's midterm elections said the future of democracy was their primary consideration at the polls, according to AP VoteCast, a national survey of the electorate.

AP

Chairman Bennie Thompson, D-Miss., center, speaks as the House select committee investigating the Jan. 6 attack on the U.S. Capitol holds its final meeting on Capitol Hill in Washington, Dec. 19, 2022.

Migrants at US-Mexico border await ruling on asylum limits

EL PASO, Texas (AP)—Francisco Palacios waited for four hours with his wife and 3-year-old daughter at a border crossing between Tijuana and San Diego early Wednesday before going to a nearby hotel for a three-hour nap. They came back, bags packed, only to be disappointed again.

But the family from the western Mexican city of Morelia is prepared to wait for the U.S. Supreme Court to decide whether and when to lift pandemic-era restrictions that have prevented many from seeking asylum, said Palacios.

"We don't have a choice," Palacios said in Spanish, explaining that his family arrived in Tijuana two weeks ago to escape violence and gangs that extorted them for years for a chunk of their income selling fruit from a street cart.

They're among thousands of migrants gathered along the Mexican side of the border, camping outside or packing into shelters as the weather grows colder.

The limits on border crossings had been set to expire Wednesday before conservative-leaning states sought the top court's help to keep them in place. The Biden administration asked the court to lift the restrictions, but not before Christmas. It's not clear when the court's decision will come.

Texas National Guard members took up positions in El Paso at the behest of the state, while volunteers and law enforcement officers worried that some migrants could succumb to the cold. Nighttime temperatures have been in the 30s and will be even colder in coming days. The Roman Catholic Diocese of El Paso, where nighttime temperatures could drop into the 20s this week, planned to open two more shelters for up to 1,000 people at area churches.

Jhorman Morey, a 38-year-old mechanic from Venezuela, warmed his hands by a campfire with a half-dozen other migrants on the southern side of the Rio Grande. He said he was waiting for a decision on the restrictions before attempting to cross into the U.S. Other migrants waded through shallow waters toward a gate in the border fence.

"I want them to decide" on the public health rule known as Title 42, said Morey, who arrived six weeks ago in the Mexican city of Juarez, across the border from El Paso. He now rarely eats after exhausting his savings.

Hundreds of migrants remained in line in Juarez. Others slept along the concrete embankments of the Rio Grande.

As crowds gathered on the riverbanks, 1st Sgt. Suzanne Ringle said one woman went into labor and was assisted by Border Patrol agents. She added that many children were among the crowd.

In Tijuana, an estimated 5,000 migrants were staying in more than 30 shelters and many more renting rooms and apartments. Layered, razor-topped walls rising 30 feet (9 meters) along the border with San Diego make the area daunting for illegal crossings.

A mood of resignation prevailed in Tijuana's Agape shelter, which housed 560 predominantly Mexican migrants on Wednesday.

Maricruz Martinez, who arrived with her 13-year-old daughter five weeks ago after fleeing violence in Mexico's Michoacan state, said rumors were rampant that migrants should line up at the border crossing to San Diego Monday.

Albert Rivera, the pastor and shelter director, convened a meeting to tell people migrants that they should only trust official U.S. sources. He convinced most occupants, but said he would like the U.S. government to provide more detailed updates.

A Mexican woman staying at the shelter with her husband and 11-year-old son, who declined to give her name because she is being pursued by a gang, said she fled her village of about 40 homes in Michoacan state after a gang forced her brother to join, killed him, and then burned her house down. The last straw came after the gang forced her 15-year-old son to join them under threat of killing the family and demanded her husband join, sending photos of chopped limbs as a message of the price for resistance.

The woman said the gang took her husband's refusal as an insult. "They think we are making fun of them for not wanting to join them," she said, fighting back tears.

As flu rages, US releases medicine from national influenza stockpile

WASHINGTON (AP)—The Biden administration said Wednesday it will release doses of prescription flu medicine from the Strategic National Stockpile to states as flu-sickened patients continue to flock to hospitals and doctors' offices around the country.

This year's flu season has hit hard and early. Some people are even noticing bare shelves at pharmacies and grocery stores when they make a run for over-the-counter medicines as cases have spiked. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that the flu has resulted in 150,000 hospitalizations and 9,300 deaths so far this season.

"Jurisdictions will be able to get the support they need to keep Americans healthy as flu cases rise this winter," Dawn O'Connell, an assistant secretary for preparedness and response at the Health and Human Services Department, which oversees the CDC, said in a statement.

States will be able to request doses of the prescription flu medication Tamiflu kept in the Strategic National Stockpile from HHS. The administration is not releasing how many doses will be made available. Antiviral medications were released from the stockpile more than a decade ago during the H1N1, also known as swine flu, pandemic.

Last week, the federal agency also announced it would allow states to dip into statewide stockpiles for Tamiflu, making millions of treatment courses available. Tamiflu can be prescribed to treat flu in people over the age of 2 weeks old.

This flu season is coming on the heels of a nasty spike of RSV, or respiratory syncytial virus, cases in children and just as COVID-19 cases are climbing — again.

Spot shortages of over-the-counter pain relievers and medicines have been reported at stores around the country, particularly for children.

HHS Secretary Xavier Becerra and Food and Drug Administration Commissioner Robert Califf hosted conversations Tuesday with leaders representing pharmaceutical companies to discuss how manufacturers are working to keep in-demand remedies available. The companies told the agencies that they are not seeing widespread shortages. Meanwhile, major drug makers like Johnson & Johnson and Perrigo report their production lines are running around the clock.

Asia

China limits how it defines COVID deaths in its count

ZHUOZHOU, China (AP)—China only counts deaths from pneumonia or respiratory failure in its official COVID-19 death toll, a Chinese health official said, a narrow definition that limits the number of deaths being reported as the virus surges following the easing of pandemic-related restrictions.

Deaths that occur in patients with pre-existing illnesses are not counted as COVID-19 deaths, said Wang Guiqiang, the head of infectious disease at Peking University's No. 1 Hospital.

China has always been conservative in how it counts illnesses, whether the flu or COVID-19. In most countries, including the United States, guidelines stipulate that any death in which COVID-19 is a factor or contributor is counted as a COVID-19-related death.

In effect, Wang's comments on Tuesday clarified publicly what the country has been doing throughout the pandemic.

On Wednesday, China reported no new COVID-19 deaths and subtracted one death from its overall toll, lowering it to 5,241, according to a daily tally issued by the National Health Commission, which did not explain the decrease.

The clarification of how China officially records COVID-19 deaths comes as cases have soared across the country amid the loosening of restrictions. Yet the overall count remains blurry, as China has stopped requiring daily PCR tests and many people are testing at home. Anecdotally, many people have fallen ill in cities such as Beijing and Shanghai.

WHO emergencies chief Dr. Michael suggested China's definition of COVID-19 deaths was too narrow.

"People who die of COVID die from many different (organ) systems' failures, given the severity of infection," Ryan said at a media briefing Wednesday. "So limiting a diagnosis of death from COVID to someone with a COVID positive test and respiratory failure will very much underestimate the true death toll associated with COVID."

Earlier this year, Shanghai was hit by an omicron-driven outbreak. Multiple people told the AP then that their elderly family members who tested positive for COVID-19 and died were not counted in the city's official death toll. When patients had underlying diseases, the deaths were attributed to those.

Japan reverts to max nuclear power to tackle energy, climate

TOKYO (AP)—Japan on Thursday adopted a new policy promoting greater use of nuclear energy to ensure a stable power supply amid global fuel shortages and to reduce carbon emissions — a major reversal of its phase-out plan since the Fukushima crisis.

The new policy says Japan must maximize the use of existing nuclear reactors by restarting as many of them as possible and prolonging the operating life of old reactors beyond their 60-year limit, and by developing next-generation reactors to replace them.

Anti-nuclear sentiment and safety concerns rose sharply in Japan after the 2011 Fukushima disaster, and restart approvals have since come slowly under stricter safety standards. Utility companies have applied for restarts at 27 reactors in the past decade. Seventeen have passed safety checks and only 10 have resumed operations. That was in line with Japan's earlier plan to phase out nuclear energy by 2030.

In a reversal, the new policy says nuclear power provides stable output and serves "an important role as a carbon-free baseload energy source in achieving supply stability and carbon neutrality" and pledges to "sustain use of nuclear power into the future."

The Economy and Industry Ministry has drafted a plan to allow extensions every 10 years for reactors after 30 years of operation, while also permitting utilities to subtract offline periods in calculating reactors' operational life beyond the current 60-year limit.

The plan was approved on Wednesday by the Nuclear Regulation Authority, Japan's nuclear watchdog, paving the way for the policy to be adopted. New safety inspection rules still need to be compiled into law and approved by Parliament.

Most nuclear reactors in Japan are more than 30 years old. Four reactors that have operated for more than 40 years have received permission to operate, and one is currently online.

The policy paper says Japan will also push for the development and construction of "next-generation innovative reactors" with safer features to replace about 20 reactors now set for decommissioning.

Thursday's adoption of the new policy comes less than four months after Prime Minister Fumio Kishida launched the "GX (Green Transformation) Implementation Council" of outside experts and ministers to "consider all options" to compile a new policy that addresses global fuel shortages amid Russia's war on Ukraine and seeks to achieve carbon neutrality by 2050.

China sends 39 warplanes, 3 ships toward Taiwan in 24 hours

TAIPEI, Taiwan (AP)—China's military sent 39 planes and three ships toward Taiwan in a 24-hour display of force directed at the island, Taiwan's defense ministry said Thursday.

China's military harassment of self-ruled Taiwan, which it claims is its own territory, has intensified in recent years, and the Communist Party's People's Liberation Army has sent planes or ships toward the island on a near-daily basis.

Between 6 a.m. Wednesday and 6 a.m. Thursday, 30 of the Chinese planes crossed the median of the Taiwan Strait, an unofficial boundary once tacitly accepted by both sides, according to Taiwan's Ministry of National Defense.

Those planes flew to the island's southwest and then horizontally all the way to the southeastern side before doubling back, according to a diagram of the flight patterns provided by Taiwan. Among the planes were 21 J-16 fighter jets, 4 H-6 bombers and two early-warning aircraft.

Taiwan said it monitored the Chinese moves through its land-based missile systems, as well as on its own navy vessels.

China's military held large military exercises in August in response to U.S. House speaker Nancy Pelosi's visit to Taiwan. Beijing views visits from foreign governments to the island as de facto recognition of the island as independent and a challenge to China's claim of sovereignty.

In its largest military exercises aimed at Taiwan in decades, China sailed ships and flew aircraft regularly across the median of the strait and even fired missiles over Taiwan itself that ended up landing in Japan's exclusive economic zone.

Commonwealth Judiciary Administrative Office
Guma' Hustisia / Iimwal Aweewe / House of Justice
P.O. Box 502165 • Saipan, MP 96950
Telephone (670) 236-9700/9800 • Facsimile: (670) 236-9702 • Website: www.nmijudiciary.com

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

The Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) Judiciary is seeking a highly motivated individual for the position of:

PROCUREMENT OFFICER / PROGRAMS SPECIALIST
On the island of SAIPAN
Announcement # JVA23-008

DUTIES: The successful candidate will work under the general supervision of the Chief Justice and under the direct supervision of the Director of Courts or designee. Serving as a general lead for procurement and asset management, duties presume substantial participation in the planning and implementation of procurement activities, services, and events that support the CNMI Judiciary's goals and objectives. The following are required duties and responsibilities:

- Performs all functions necessary as lead for procurement matters with the Judicial Branch pursuant to the NMI Judiciary Rules of
- Procurement adopted on August 11, 2020, through Supreme Court Order No. 2020-ADM-0016-RUL, including those specifically set forth herein;
- Implements all programs and projects of the NMI Judiciary Office of Procurement;
- Oversees the receipt of inquiries and facilitates a rapid response system for matters involving procurement of services, goods, property and related assets;
- Develops, plans, implements, and maintains procurement and asset management strategies;
- Oversees the design, planning, production, and dissemination of publications, program outlines, public reports, news releases, videos, newsletters, brochures, and other information related to procurement services and asset management;
- Drafts and updates internal operating procedures, including property and asset acquisition, maintenance, location, disposition and related management.
- Drafts letters, reports, memorandums, notices, financial statements, forms, templates, and standard documents to be used in procurement and asset tracking and management.
- Researches and recommends best practices for internal controls and project enhancements, to increase efficiency, effectiveness, transparency, and accountability;
- Assists in the procurement process from planning to contracting, as necessary to fulfill the procurement needs of the Judiciary's operations and programs. Assistance will include drafting and/or reviewing procurement documents, such as purchase requisitions, requests for quotations, scope of work, invitations to bid, requests for proposals, advertisements, other supporting documentation, transmittals, notices to proceed, notices of award, and contracts. It will also include assisting with pre-award matters, such as selection committee creation, and after-contract monitoring of work and closing out contract documents;
- Performs data and electronic processing for procurement purposes on the Judiciary's designated platforms including but not limited to MUNIS, Laserfiche, Microsoft Office 365, and other database interface tools;
- Calendars and tracks all procurement matters and documents, and assists in the maintenance of procurement records, to ensure adherence to all applicable laws, regulations, and rules related to procurement;
- Assists with the workflow and processes of procurement evaluation phase(s), purchasing plans, payment schedules, and monitors compliance factors like administrative costs, insurance, and related items;
- Assists with the consistent review and lawful application of quality assurance controls, asset acquisitions, transfers, disposal, and management protocols, procurement practices, and related workflow;
- Assists with the identification of potential funding sources from federal, foundation, CNMI, and justice partners;
- Maintains and updates indexes and information on purchase requisitions, contracts, deliverables, inventories, fleets, suppliers/vendors, licenses, prices, transportation and shipping, and delivery timetables.
- Assists with the maintenance, implementation, and tracking of current and new timelines for projects, funding sources, activities and events;
- Provides technical assistance and training for designated programs, projects, and operating procedures that directly or indirectly affect workflow of the Office of Procurement;
- Maintains physical, digital, and indexed files of administrative documents and records pursuant to the Judiciary's document retention policy and all applicable laws, regulations, and rules;
- Provides effective phone etiquette and customer service skills and promotes consistent institutional identity of the Judiciary;
- Manages and records time and efforts;
- Adheres to and complies with all applicable policies, standards, and codes of ethical conduct; and
- Performs other duties as assigned.

QUALIFICATIONS AND REQUIREMENTS: The Procurement Officer must have a high school diploma or equivalent. Must also have completed graduation from an accredited college or university with a bachelor's degree with major course work in courts, public, or business administration or a related field, plus (4) years of experience in the public or private sector wherein two (2) years were in a support position to senior management level role; or any equivalent combination of education, experience, and training which provides the minimum knowledge, abilities and skills.

The Procurement Officer/Program Specialist must:

- have strong background in the use of computers, electronic devices, and standard office equipment;
- be adept at public speaking and conducting group training;
- have strong background in the use of data management software including but not limited to those that carry functions for standard word-processing, database storage and maneuverability, accounting spreadsheets, digital filing, and presentations. Experience with Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Acrobat, Justware, and Laserfiche preferred;
- have strong background in web-based work, internet use, and electronic mail;
- demonstrates strong organizational skills and attention to detail;
- Ability to handle multiple tasks and work effectively while maintaining composure under critical situations within tight time constraints;
- have the ability to maintain sensitive information confidential;
- have the ability to multitask and work under pressure; and,
- Takes initiative and works both independently and cooperatively in a team environment.

Candidate must provide current police and traffic clearances and proof of eligibility to work in the CNMI. Must have a valid drivers' license and operate a court vehicle. Applicants given a conditional offer of employment with the CNMI Judiciary will be required to submit to urinalysis to screen for the illegal use of drugs prior to employment. "Illegal drug" means a substance whose use or possession is controlled by federal law but that is not being used or possessed under the supervision of a licensed health care professional. (Controlled substances are listed in Schedules I-V of 21 C.F.R. Part 1308.)

Education completed in foreign colleges or universities may be used to meet the job qualification requirements if the applicant can show that foreign education is comparable to education received in accredited educational institutions in the United States.

It is the responsibility of the applicant to provide such evidence when applying for Judiciary jobs. Education received in foreign colleges or universities will be considered if the candidate submits an evaluation of the coursework from: (a) an accredited U.S. college or university; or (b) a private professional organization specializing in interpretation of foreign educational credentials.[1]

COMPENSATION AND TENURE: This position is appointed by and serves at the pleasure of the Chief Justice. The salary range will be $40,000 – 45,000 per annum.

INTERESTED PERSONS: Application forms are available at the Judiciary Administrative Office at the Guma Hustisia/Iimwal Aweewe/House of Justice in Susupe, or at the Superior Court offices on Kotten Tinian and Centron Hustisia in Rota during normal business hours except on weekends and holidays. Completed applications, cover letter, and three references should be submitted to:

NMI Judiciary
Human Resources
Guma' Hustisia/Iimwal Aweewe/House of Justice
P.O. Box 502165
Saipan, MP 96950
Tel. (670) 236-9818
Cell. (670) 783-8592
hr.judiciary@NMIjudiciary.gov

This job announcement will remain open until filled and can be seen and a printable copy of the application downloaded at http://www.nmijudiciary.gov

The Judiciary reserves the right to rescind or cancel this JVA at any time without notice.

[1]The following organizations evaluate foreign educational credentials for employment and other purposes. All operate on a fee based on the extent of the education to be evaluated; applicants shall bear the cost of evaluation.
(a) Credentials Evaluation Service P.O. Box 24679 Los Angeles, CA 90024
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World

Zelenskyy thanks 'every American,' sees 'turning point'

AP

Vice President Kamala Harris and House Speaker Nancy Pelosi of Calif., right, react as Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy presents lawmakers with a Ukrainian flag autographed by front-line troops in Bakhmut, in Ukraine's contested Donetsk province, as he addresses a joint meeting of Congress on Capitol Hill in Washington, Wednesday, Dec. 21, 2022.

WASHINGTON (AP)—Ukraine's Volodymyr Zelenskyy told cheering U.S. legislators during a defiant wartime visit to the nation's capital on Wednesday that against all odds his country still stands, thanking Americans for helping to fund the war effort with money that is "not charity," but an "investment" in global security and democracy.

The whirlwind stop in Washington—his first known trip outside his country since Russia invaded in February—was aimed at reinvigorating support for his country in the U.S. and around the world at a time when there is concern that allies are growing weary of the costly war and its disruption to global food and energy supplies.

Zelenskyy called the tens of billions of dollars in U.S. military and economic assistance provided over the past year vital to Ukraine's efforts to beat back Russia and appealed for even more in the future.

"Your money is not charity," he sought to reassure both those in the room and those watching at home. "It's an investment in the global security and democracy that we handle in the most responsible way."

Just before his arrival, the U.S. announced a new $1.8 billion military aid package, including for the first time Patriot surface-to-air missiles. And Congress planned to vote this week on a fresh spending package that includes about $45 billion in additional emergency assistance to Ukraine.

The speech to Congress came after President Joe Biden hosted Zelenskyy in the Oval Office for strategy consultations, saying the U.S. and Ukraine would maintain their "united defense" as Russia wages a "brutal assault on Ukraine's right to exist as a nation." Biden pledged to help bring about a "just peace."

Zelenskyy told Biden that he had wanted to visit sooner and his visit now demonstrates that the "situation is under control, because of your support."

The highly sensitive trip came after 10 months of a brutal war that has seen tens of thousands of casualties on both sides and devastation for Ukrainian civilians.

Zelenskyy traveled to Washington aboard a U.S. Air Force jet. The visit had been long sought by both sides, but the right conditions only came together in the last 10 days, U.S. officials said, after high-level discussions about the security both of Zelenskyy and of his people while he was outside of Ukraine. Zelenskyy spent less than 10 hours in Washington before beginning the journey back to Ukraine.

Policy, climate, war make 2022 'pivot year' for clean energy

BENGALURU, India (AP)—For renewable energy companies in India, it's a good time to be in business.

One of India's largest renewable energy firms, Renew Power, will be among the corporations big and small hoping for a piece of a $2.6 billion government scheme that encourages the domestic manufacturing of components required to produce solar energy. It's the biggest such incentive in India's history.

Renew Power's CEO Sumant Sinha said the government funds for clean energy send "a strong signal" that the country wants "to become a manufacturing location for renewable energy equipment and a global alternative to China eventually."

"We are excited to be a part of this journey," he said.

The company has over 100 clean energy projects across India and has become the world's tenth largest solar and wind energy company in just over a decade.

Other major governments around the world have been green lighting ambitious renewable energy policies this past year that aim for major expansions of wind and solar energies, along with development of technologies like carbon capture, which captures carbon dioxide, a central cause of climate change, and stores it in the ground. Some of the policies also include tax credits to buy electric vehicles, heat pumps or energy efficient materials for construction.

The United States signed into law the Inflation Reduction Act, the most ambitious climate legislation in U.S. history, the European parliament passed the REPower EU plan to reduce dependence on Russian fossil fuels and fast forward the transition to clean energy and China announced ambitious schemes to enable the country to meet its 2030 clean energy goals five years ahead of schedule.

Experts say the task is now to build on this momentum in 2023, strengthen energy grid infrastructure and resolve backend issues which slow down the distribution and transmission of clean energy.

"From an energy perspective, 2022 will go down as a pivot year. For the first time, we have discernible proof that fossil fuel demand after 200 years of growth had reached a peak in 2019 and we are now bumping along a plateau before an inevitable decline," said Kingsmill Bond, an energy strategist at the Rocky Mountain Institute, a clean energy non-profit group.

RMI's research has found that global energy demand grew by around six additional exajoules in 2022 — enough energy for around 6 million transatlantic flights. This is less than usual year-on-year growth as energy use is getting more efficient, the report said. Solar and wind supply growth this year was also calculated to be about six exajoules.

Bond added that the price of clean energy was getting closer to that of fossil fuels and in some cases it was cheaper.

A report by the International Energy Agency said that oil prices rose well above $100 per barrel in mid-2022 and high gas and coal prices accounted for electricity cost hikes around the world. But increased use of clean energy saved Asian countries, including China and India, a total of $34 billion in the past year, a separate report found.

Energy analysts say that the global energy crisis triggered by the Russian invasion of Ukraine and increasing climate threats such as the disastrous floods in Pakistan have accelerated the clean energy policies and big tickets investments that are needed to transition to renewable energy, especially wind and solar energy, around the world.

WORLD BRIEFS

Israel's Netanyahu says he has formed new government

JERUSALEM (AP)—Designated Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu announced late Wednesday that he has successfully formed a new coalition, setting the stage for him to return to power as head of the most right-wing Israeli government ever to hold office.

Netanyahu made the announcement in a phone call to President Isaac Herzog moments before a midnight deadline. His Likud Party released a brief video clip of the smiling Netanyahu and a recording of the conversation.

"I wanted to announce to you that thanks to the amazing public support we received in the elections, I have succeeded in forming a government that will take care of all the citizens of Israel," Netanyahu said.

The move came after weeks of surprisingly difficult negotiations with his partners – who still have need to finalize their power-sharing deals with Netanyahu's Likud Party. Nonetheless, Netanyahu said he intends to complete the process "as soon as possible next week" A date for its swearing-in wasn't immediately announced.

Long-cut phones ring again in Ethiopia's Tigray, bring grief

NAIROBI, Kenya (AP)—For a year and a half, phone calls to people trying to survive one of the world's worst wars didn't go through. Now, as phone lines start to be restored to parts of Ethiopia's Tigray region after a fragile peace deal, some Tigrayans are relieved while others grieve.

"I have been dreading receiving phone calls," said a Tigrayan living in Norway, who like others spoke with The Associated Press on condition of anonymity out of fear of reprisals against his relatives. "You want to speak to your family, but you don't know what kind of stories you will hear, in terms of who is still alive."

The conflict between Ethiopian and allied forces against the Tigray side is estimated to have killed hundreds of thousands of people since late 2020, according to the United Nations and the United States, citing academic research. The U.N. secretary-general has said more people have died in this conflict than in Ukraine's.

Only now are many Tigrayans starting to learn the fate of loved ones as phone lines are reconnected in some areas that have returned to the control of Ethiopia's federal government.

Red Cross conducts rare visit with 3,400 Yemen war prisoners

GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip (AP)—The Red Cross said Wednesday that it had conducted rare visits to thousands of prisoners on both sides of Yemen's eight-year civil war, a step that could pave the way for an exchange of detainees between the rival parties.

Fabrizio Carboni, the International Committee of the Red Cross's director for the Middle East, told The Associated Press that members of the organization had seen more than 3,400 individuals in a 10-day visit to a facility in Saudi Arabia in December and a separate trip to Yemen's capital, Sanaa, in October. Carboni was speaking in a Zoom call from Geneva, where he is based.

He said members of the organization had been allowed access to some of the most "secret and sensitive places" in each country, and will be able to inform many detainees' loved ones of their whereabouts.

"It means the authorities accept our presence and what comes with our presence, which is the capacity to repeat the visits, the fact that we will inform the families," Carboni said.

Off The Wall

Deputy dressed as Grinch gives onions to speeding drivers

MARATHON, Fla. (AP)—Several motorists who were speeding through an elementary school zone on the Florida Keys Overseas Highway received an odorous onion as a reminder to slow down from a county sheriff's deputy dressed as the Grinch.

Col. Lou Caputo, a 37-year veteran of the Monroe County Sheriff's Office who conjured up the concept more than 20 years ago, was back on the streets Tuesday.

Drivers who travel about 5 mph or less above the school zone's speed limit can choose between traffic citations and an onion presented by the Grinch. Those speeding beyond that likely receive a costly ticket.

AP

In this photo provided by the Florida Keys News Bureau, a Maryland motorist, left, accepts an onion instead of a traffic citation from Monroe County Sheriff's Office Colonel Lou Caputo, right, costumed as the Grinch, Tuesday, Dec. 13, 2022, in Marathon, Fla.

"It's about education, awareness that our school zones are still operating even though it's the holiday season," Caputo said. "We want people to slow down."

Caputo said he portrays the fictional character created by children's author Dr. Seuss to give motorists a "gift" but also to call attention in a nice way to the need to obey speed limits in school zones.

"It catches them off guard," Caputo said.

"But when I give them a clear choice of a citation or the onion, they will take the onion. And I've had them eat the onion right in front of me."

Keys schools remain in session through Dec. 16.

Mars rover captures 1st sound of dust devil on red planet

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. (AP)—What's a dust devil sound like on Mars? A NASA rover by chance had its microphone on when a whirling tower of red dust passed directly overhead, recording the racket.

It's about 10 seconds of not only rumbling gusts of up to 25 mph (40 kph), but the pinging of hundreds of dust particles against the rover Perseverance. Scientists released the first-of-its-kind audio Tuesday.

It sounds strikingly similar to dust devils on Earth, although quieter since Mars' thin atmosphere makes for more muted sounds and less forceful wind, according to the researchers.

The dust devil came and went over Perseverance quickly last year, thus the short length of the audio, said the University of Toulouse's Naomi Murdoch, lead author of the study appearing in Nature Communications. At the same time, the navigation camera on the parked rover captured images, while its weather-monitoring instrument collected data.

"It was fully caught red-handed by Persy," said co-author German Martinez of the Lunar and Planetary Institute in Houston.

Photographed for decades at Mars but never heard until now, dust devils are common at the red planet. This one was in the average range: at least 400 feet (118 meters) tall and 80 feet (25 meters) across, traveling at 16 feet (5 meters) per second.

Commonwealth Judiciary Administrative Office
Guma' Hustisia / Iimwal Aweewe / House of Justice
P.O. Box 502165 • Saipan, MP 96950
Telephone (670) 236-9700/9800 • Facsimile: (670) 236-9702 • Website: www.nmijudiciary.com

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

The Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) Judiciary is seeking a highly motivated individual for the position of:

DEPUTY CLERK I (TINIAN)
Announcement # JVA23-006
Office of the Clerk of Court
Superior Court

DUTIES: This position is under the general supervision of the Presiding Judge and the direct supervision of the Clerk of Court or his/her designee. The employee in this class performs work in accordance with established policies, practices, and court procedures. The following are required duties:

- Receives, reviews, and records documents filed for hearings;
- Provides data entry of pleadings onto the court's case management system;
- Sets court calendar of the judge to whom assigned, and maintains update of same through the court's case management system;
- Provides daily updates of pleadings and other caseload information for assigned judge through the court's automated processes, including but not limited to the document imaging and online filing system;
- Inspects physical and electronic documents submitted to court, including looking for accuracy, proper form, and conformance with court order or court rules;
- Assesses fines, receives and accounts for monies, issues receipts, prepares deposit slips and provides disbursements per court order or requests from customer service window;
- Drafts orders and other court forms;
- Prepares and maintains physical and electronic file folders for court cases, including tracking of all pleadings associated with individual cases files;
- Serves as a courtroom clerk when court hearings are in session, including but not limited to swearing in of witnesses, logging of all admitted exhibits, tracking all phases of a hearing on an index sheet for the recording counter, operating the electronic recording equipment, and providing continuous monitoring of the recording equipment to ensure the integrity of the record; and, performs other related duties as assigned, and
- Performs other related duties as assigned.

QUALIFICATIONS AND REQUIREMENTS: The candidate should have high school diploma or equivalent plus a minimum of three (3) related work experience and a strong preference for those with work experience in the legal field.

Must be able to exercise good judgment in stressful situations.

Must have the ability to maintain and control sensitive and confidential information, maintain records professionally, and uphold office policies. Must be proficient with the use of general office software including but not limited to Microsoft Word and Excel. Must have a valid CNMI driver's license and be operate to operate a court vehicle.

Candidate must provide current police and traffic clearances and proof of eligibility to work in the CNMI. Must have a valid drivers' license and operate a court vehicle. Applicants given a conditional offer of employment with the CNMI Judiciary will be required to submit to urinalysis to screen for the illegal use of drugs prior to employment. "Illegal drug" means a substance whose use or possession is controlled by federal law but that is not being used or possessed under the supervision of a licensed health care professional. (Controlled substances are listed in Schedules I-V of 21 C.F.R. Part 1308.)

Education completed in foreign colleges or universities may be used to meet the job qualification requirements if the applicant can show that foreign education is comparable to education received in accredited educational institutions in the United States.

It is the responsibility of the applicant to provide such evidence when applying for Judiciary jobs. Education received in foreign colleges or universities will be considered if the candidate submits an evaluation of the coursework from: (a) an accredited U.S. college or university; or (b) a private professional organization specializing in interpretation of foreign educational credentials.[1]

COMPENSATION AND TENURE: This is position serves under the general supervision of the Presiding Judge. The salary range will be $24,000 - $26,400 annually.

INTERESTED PERSONS: Application forms are available at the Judiciary Administrative Office at the Guma Hustisia/Iimwal Aweewe/House of Justice in Susupe, or at the Superior Court offices at Kotten Tinian in Tinian and Centron Hustisia in Rota during normal business hours except on weekends and holidays. Completed applications, cover letter, and three references should be submitted to:

NMI Judiciary
Human Resources
Guma' Hustisia/Iimwal Aweewe/House of Justice
P.O. Box 502165
Saipan, MP 96950
Tel. (670) 236-9818
Cell. (670) 783-8592
hr.judiciary@NMIjudiciary.gov

This job announcement will remain open until filled and can be seen and a printable copy of the application downloaded at http://www.nmijudiciary.gov

The Judiciary reserves the right to rescind or cancel this JVA at any time without notice.

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EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

The Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) Judiciary is seeking a highly motivated individual for the position of:

AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT (ARPA)
SCANNING CLERK
for Saipan
Judiciary Administrative Office
Announcement #JVA23-007

DUTIES: The successful candidate will work under the direct supervision of the Chief Justice and the direct supervision of the Clerk of Court or his/her designee. The employee in this class performs a wide variety of administrative duties essential to create or enhance remote access and virtual judicial services. The incumbent is responsible to perform the following duties and responsibilities:

- Review and compile all court documents for scanning;
- Scan all documents necessary to create or enhance remote access and virtual judicial services;
- Check quality of scanned documents;
- Inspect regularly quality and assuring smooth functioning of scanners;
- Compile scanned documents;
- Reconcile, confirm and/or audit physical document with digitized image of same;
- Report progress regarding scanning, including communicating concerns to technicians and maintaining coordination of movement of files;
- Computing charges and developing a list of billing, if any; and
- Performs other duties as assigned.

QUALIFICATIONS AND REQUIREMENTS: The ARPA Scanning Clerk should have a high school diploma or equivalent plus a minimum of two years of experience in secretarial or administrative support or related work.

Must be able to work under pressure and work in a fast-paced environment.

Must have the ability to maintain and control sensitive and confidential information, maintain records professionally, and uphold office policies. Must be proficient with the use of general office software including but not limited to Microsoft Word and Excel.

Candidate must provide current police and traffic clearances and proof of eligibility to work in the CNMI. Must have a valid drivers' license and operate a court vehicle. Applicants given a conditional offer of employment with the CNMI Judiciary will be required to submit to urinalysis to screen for the illegal use of drugs prior to employment. "Illegal drug" means a substance whose use or possession is controlled by federal law but that is not being used or possessed under the supervision of a licensed health care professional. (Controlled substances are listed in Schedules I-V of 21 C.F.R. Part 1308.)

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COMPENSATION AND TENURE: This position is funded by the ARPA and is temporary in nature. This position is appointed by and serves at the pleasure of the Chief Justice. The salary range will be $23,000 - $25,000 per annum.

INTERESTED PERSONS: Application forms are available at the Marianas Business Plaza, Suite 203 on the second floor, or at the Superior Court offices at Kotten Tinian in Tinian and Centron Hustisia in Rota during normal business hours except on weekends and holidays. Completed applications, cover letter, and three references should be submitted to:

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This job announcement will remain open until filled and can be seen and a printable copy of the application downloaded at http://www.nmijudiciary.gov

This position is supported, in whole or in part, by the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds, CNMI award number CNMI22004, awarded to the CNMI Judiciary by the CNMI Department of Finance.

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Science & Technology

Mystery Nevada fossil site could be ancient maternity ward

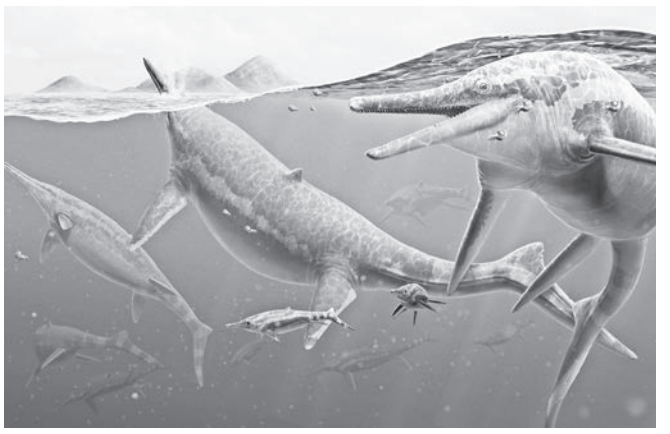
NEW YORK (AP)—Scientists have uncovered new clues about a curious fossil site in Nevada, a graveyard for dozens of giant marine reptiles. Instead of the site of a massive die-off as suspected, it might have been an ancient maternity ward where the creatures came to give birth.

The site is famous for its fossils from giant ichthyosaurs—reptiles that dominated the ancient seas and could grow up to the size of a school bus. The creatures—the name means fish lizard—were underwater predators with large paddle-shaped flippers and long jaws full of teeth.

Since the ichthyosaur bones in Nevada were excavated in the 1950s, many paleontologists have investigated how all these creatures could have died together. Now, researchers have proposed a different theory in a study published Monday in the journal Current Biology.

"Several lines of evidence all kind of point towards one argument here: That this was a place where giant ichthyosaurs came to give birth," said co-author Nicholas Pyenson, curator of fossil marine mammals at the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History.

Once a tropical sea, the site—part of Nevada's Berlin-Ichthyosaur State Park—now sits in a dry, dusty landscape near an abandoned mining town, said lead author Randy Irmis, a paleontologist at the University of Utah.



GABRIEL UGUETO/NMNH VIA AP

This illustration provided by the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History in December 2022 depicts a group of adult and newly born Triassic shonisaurus ichthyosaurs.

To get a better look at the massive skeletons, which boast vertebrae the size of dinner plates and bones from their flippers as thick as boulders, researchers used 3D scanning to create a detailed digital model, Irmis said.

They identified fossils from at least 37 ichthyosaurs scattered around the area, dating back about 230 million years. The bones were preserved in different rock layers, suggesting the creatures could have died hundreds of thousands of years apart rather than all at once, Pyenson said.

A major break came when the researchers spotted some tiny bones among the massive adult fossils, and realized they belonged to embryos and newborns, Pyenson said. The researchers concluded that the creatures traveled to the site in groups for protection as they gave birth, like today's marine giants. The fossils are believed to be from the mothers and offspring that died there over the years.

"Finding a place to give birth separated from a place where you might feed is really common in the modern world—among whales, among sharks," Pyenson said.

Other clues helped rule out some previous explanations.

Testing the chemicals in the dirt didn't turn up any signs of volcanic eruptions or huge shifts to the local environment. And the geology showed that the reptiles were preserved on the ocean floor pretty far from the shore—meaning they probably didn't die in a mass beaching event, Irmis said.

The new study offers a plausible explanation for a site that's baffled paleontologists for decades, said Dean Lomax, an ichthyosaur specialist at England's University of Manchester who was not involved with the research.

The case may not be fully closed yet but the study "really helps to unlock a little bit more about this fascinating site," Lomax said.

NASA Mars lander InSight falls silent after 4 years

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. (AP)—It could be the end of the red dusty line for NASA's InSight lander, which has fallen silent after four years on Mars.

The lander's power levels have been dwindling for months because of all the dust coating its solar panels. Ground controllers at California's Jet Propulsion Laboratory knew the end was near, but NASA reported that InSight unexpectedly didn't respond to communications from Earth on Sunday.

"It's assumed InSight may have reached the end of its operations," NASA said late Monday, adding that its last communication was Thursday. "It's unknown what prompted the change in its energy."

The team will keep trying to contact InSight, just in case.

InSight landed on Mars in 2018 and was the first spacecraft to document a marsquake. It detected more than 1,300 marsquakes with its French-built seismometer, including several caused by meteoroid strikes. The most recent marsquake sensed by InSight, earlier this year, left the ground shaking for at least six hours, according to NASA.

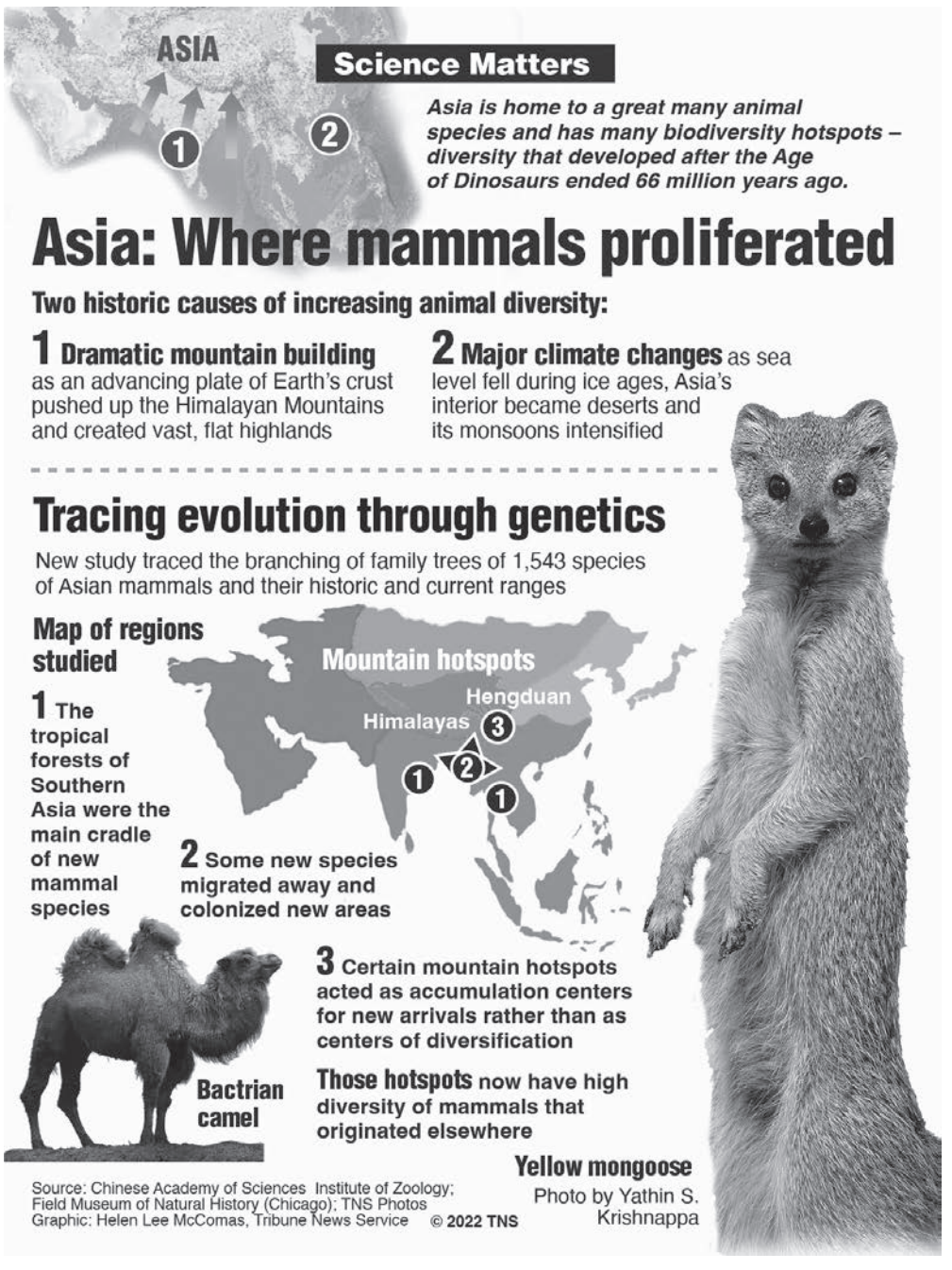
The seismometer readings shed light on Mars' interior.

Just last week, scientists revealed that InSight scored another first, capturing a Martian dust devil not just in pictures, but sound. In a stroke of luck, the whirling column of dust blew directly over the lander in 2021 when its microphone was on.

The lander's other main instrument, however, encountered nothing but trouble.

A German digging device—meant to measure the temperature of Mars' interior—never made it deeper than a couple feet (half a meter), well short of the intended 16 feet (5 meters). NASA declared it dead nearly two years ago.

InSight recently sent back one last selfie, shared by NASA via Twitter on Monday.


ASIA
Science Matters
Asia is home to a great many animal species and has many biodiversity hotspots – diversity that developed after the Age of Dinosaurs ended 66 million years ago.
Asia: Where mammals proliferated
Two historic causes of increasing animal diversity:
1 Dramatic mountain building as an advancing plate of Earth's crust pushed up the Himalayan Mountains and created vast, flat highlands
2 Major climate changes as sea level fell during ice ages, Asia's interior became deserts and its monsoons intensified
Tracing evolution through genetics
New study traced the branching of family trees of 1,543 species of Asian mammals and their historic and current ranges
Map of regions studied
Mountain hotspots
Hengduan
Himalayas
1 The tropical forests of Southern Asia were the main cradle of new mammal species
2 Some new species migrated away and colonized new areas
3 Certain mountain hotspots acted as accumulation centers for new arrivals rather than as centers of diversification
Those hotspots now have high diversity of mammals that originated elsewhere
Bactrian camel
Yellow mongoose
Photo by Yathin S. Krishnappa
Source: Chinese Academy of Sciences Institute of Zoology; Field Museum of Natural History (Chicago); TNS Photos
Graphic: Helen Lee McComas, Tribune News Service © 2022 TNS

Scientists: Atmospheric carbon might turn lakes more acidic

TRAVERSE CITY, Mich. (AP)—The Great Lakes have endured a lot the past century, from supersized algae blobs to invasive mussels and blood-sucking sea lamprey that nearly wiped out fish populations.

Now, another danger: They—and other big lakes around the world—might be getting more acidic, which could make them less hospitable for some fish and plants.

Scientists are building a sensor network to spot Lake Huron water chemistry trends. It's a first step toward a hoped-for system that would track carbon dioxide and pH in all five Great Lakes over multiple years, said project co-leader Reagan Errera of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

"If you change things chemically, you're going to change how things behave and work and that includes the food web," said Errera, a research ecologist with NOAA's Great Lakes Environmental Research Laboratory in Ann Arbor, Michigan.

"Does that mean your favorite fish might not be around any more? We don't know that, but we know things will change. Maybe where and when they spawn, where they're located, what they eat."

Oceans are becoming more acidic as they absorb carbon dioxide that human activity pumps into the atmosphere—the primary cause of climate change. Acidification endangers coral reefs and other marine life.

Studies based on computer models suggest the same thing may be happening in big freshwater systems. But few programs are conducting long-term monitoring to find out—or to investigate the ecological ripple effects.

"This doesn't mean the waters are going to be unsafe to swim in. It's not like we're making super acid battery liquid," said Galen McKinley, a Columbia University environmental sciences professor. "We're talking about long-term change in the environment that to humans would be imperceptible."

A 2018 study of four German reservoirs found their pH levels had declined—moving closer to acidity—three times faster in 35 years than in oceans since the Industrial Revolution.

Researchers say Great Lakes also could approach acidity around the same rate as in oceans by 2100. Data from the Lake Huron project will help determine if they're right.

Two sensors have been attached to a floating weather buoy at Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary near Alpena, Michigan. One measures carbon dioxide pressure in the water column and the other pH. Additionally, crews are collecting water samples at varying depths within the 4,300-square-mile (11,137-square-kilometer) area for chemical analysis.

Besides disrupting aquatic life and habitat, acidification could deteriorate hundreds of wooden shipwrecks believed resting on the bottom, said Stephanie Gandulla, the sanctuary's resource protection coordinator and a study co-leader.

Life & Style

Netflix plans $900M facility at former New Jersey Army base

AP
The Netflix logo is pictured on a remote control in Portland, Ore., Aug. 13, 2020.

Netflix said Wednesday it plans to build a state-of-the-art production facility at a former Army base at the Jersey Shore that will cost more than $900 million, and create thousands of jobs.

The subscription video streaming company will pay $55 million for a 292-acre site on the former Fort Monmouth military base in Eatontown and Oceanport.

The California-based company plans an additional $848 million worth of investments in 12 sound stages and for other uses related to the film industry.

"We're thrilled to continue and expand our significant investment in New Jersey and North America," said Ted Sarandos, the company's co-CEO and chief content officer. "We believe a Netflix studio can boost the local and state economy with thousands of new jobs and billions in economic output, while sparking a vibrant production ecosystem in New Jersey."

The announcement was made Wednesday evening, following a vote by the Fort Monmouth Economic Revitalization Authority to accept Netflix's bid over three competing offers.

"This transformative investment will serve as a cornerstone in our efforts to create a thriving industry from whole cloth," said New Jersey Gov. Phil Murphy, a Democrat. "As a result of nearly a billion dollars in film production spending, New Jersey will further solidify its status as an emerging national leader in the television and film industries."

He also said the project will create new housing, hotel and film-related businesses in the area, which has suffered economically since the Army closed the base in 2011.

Voilà! 'Emily In Paris' returns, with surprises in store

PARIS (AP)—"Emily in Paris" fans will get a few surprises in their Christmas stockings, when the third season of the hit show arrives on Netflix this Wednesday.

Even the cast were shocked by the number of cliffhangers in the new series when they first read the scripts.

"I'm like, how are we going to film all—like, what?" says Lily Collins, who portrays the titular American marketing executive making her social media presence felt in France.

"But it was a real ride. It was a real rollercoaster to shoot. And it was really fun too," she adds.

Season three provides more career choices, designer dilemmas and romantic revelations for the fashionable female lead character.

Although Lucas Bravo—who portrays Emily's full-time neighbor and sometime love interest, the chef Gabriel—reckons that she isn't the only one wrestling with problems this series.

"Before it was only Emily's chaos," says Bravo. "Now everybody has his own story with his own chaos. And it's a big soup of chaos and drama."

Season one arrived in October 2020, followed by a second last December. Three years into playing their characters, the cast members are keen to point out where their roles start and finish.

Collins—who is also an executive producer—says that she has always fit in better than Emily in France because she actually knows the language and culture.

Which, with Emily's questionable French pronunciation, leads to tongue twisters.

"It's a little bit difficult to pretend like you don't know how to say something," Collins explains. "To mispronounce it over and over and over again, it's like ... I just want to answer it fully in French. So it is tricky."

Kate Walsh plays Emily's American boss Madeline and would like everyone to know that she has very different taste in clothing from her brash and brightly colored character.

Norway's aging king discharged from the hospital

COPENHAGEN, Denmark (AP)—Norway's King Harald V was discharged Wednesday from an Oslo hospital where he had received treatment with intravenous antibiotics for an infection.

"The king is on the road to recovery, but will take it easy for a few days," the Norwegian palace said in a brief statement. The 85-year-old monarch was hospitalized Monday at Rikshospitalet, which is part of the main hospital in Oslo.

King Harald V

The heir to the throne, Crown Prince Haakon, had stepped in and taken over his father's duties.

Harald, who has been seen using crutches in recent years, has been hospitalized several times in recent months, including for another infection in August. He went through a successful operation to replace a heart valve in October 2020 after being hospitalized with breathing difficulties.

Harald's duties as Norway's head of state are ceremonial, and he holds no political power. He ascended to the throne following the death of his father, King Olav, in 1991.

SHOWBIZ TIDBITS

Trevor Noah goes for a threepeat of Grammy Award hosting

NEW YORK (AP)—Unemployment didn't last long for Trevor Noah—he's hosting the Grammy Awards in early 2023. The comedian who recently left his post as host of "The Daily Show" on Comedy Central has been asked to be master of ceremonies on Feb. 5, which will be his third time leading the Grammys. The ceremony will return to Los Angeles after last year relocating to Las Vegas because of rising COVID-19 cases and the omicron variant. The show will be held at Crypto.com Arena. Beyoncé goes into the ceremony with a leading nine nominations, including her song "Break My Soul" earning nods for record and song of the year. Kendrick Lamar has the second-most nominations, with eight. Adele and Brandi Carlile both received seven nods. Harry Styles, Mary J. Blige, Future, DJ Khaled, The-Dream and mastering engineer Randy Merrill each picked up six.

NFL Honors awards show to be hosted by Kelly Clarkson

Musical artist Kelly Clarkson will host the 12th annual NFL Honors awards show Feb. 9 in Phoenix, recognizing the league's best players, performances and plays from the 2022 season. The Emmy and Grammy-award winning artist will be the first woman to host the show, where multiple NFL awards will be announced, a spokesperson said Friday in a new release. The NFL Honors show debuted in 2012 and features the announcement of The Associated Press' annual awards, the Walter Payton NFL Man of the Year award, and the newest Pro Football Hall of Fame class, among others. The show is held annually the week before the Super Bowl. Past hosts include Keegan-Michael Key, Steve Harvey, Alec Baldwin, Seth Meyers, Rob Riggle and Conan O'Brien. The show will air live at 9 p.m. EST from Symphony Hall. It will be carried by NBC, NFL Network and Peacock.

Cecily Strong leaves Saturday Night Live after 11 seasons

After 11 seasons, Cecily Strong has said farewell to "Saturday Night Live." A few hours before the last episode of the season Saturday, the TV show's Instagram account posted a cue card saying, "we'll miss you, Cecily." The caption read "Tonight we send off one of the best to ever do it." A two-time Emmy nominee for her work on the show, Strong was known for characters like the Girl You Wish You Hadn't Started a Conversation With At a Party and impressions of people like Fox News host Judge Jeanine Pirro and U.S. Rep. Marjorie Taylor Green. During Saturday's show, she broke character as Michael Che's drug-addicted neighbor Cathy Anne on Weekend Update to give a personal statement.

Student plans for future with long-distance beau

DEAR ABBY: I am a senior in high school in a long-distance relationship. My boyfriend, "Grant," and I live two states apart and have visited each other several times. He's four years older than I am. We met three years ago, when Grant was 19 and I was 15, and became friends through banter online. However, he had a girlfriend and we were nothing more than friends. I developed feelings, but he did not reciprocate because I was underage. Later, after he and his girlfriend broke up, I told him how I felt and we became a couple. That was 10 months ago.

Grant asked me to move in with him next year, and I have decided to do so. His college tuition and housing are paid for, and he wants to help in paying mine while we pursue an in-person relationship. Some of my relatives know about my decision, but the two family members I live with do not. They are very serious and old-fashioned in their beliefs and do not respect my relationship in any way. I'm not sure how to tell them about my decision to move 900 miles away to a state where neither Grant nor I have friends or family. I'm looking for any advice possible.

BIG PLANS IN INDIANA

DEAR BIG PLANS: I'm glad you are seeking advice about this because I have serious reservations about what you are planning. If you move in with Grant (as generous as his offer may be), you will be denying him and yourself an important aspect of the college experience. This is a chance for each of you to complete your education, as well as grow and define yourselves as INDIVIDUALS. Both of you will meet new people and develop interests apart from the other, which is both challenging and healthy. Please do not deny yourself or Grant this important experience.

■■■■

DEAR ABBY: Our family is worried about my brother. Ever since he met and married his wife, he has changed. There was a "surprise" baby. Access to the baby is limited—even my parents, who visit only once a year, must schedule an appointment at least two days in advance. My brother now rarely leaves the house. He has begun questioning my parents about their will. He is asking to be bought out of the family business, which he has stated numerous times that he absolutely loves being a part of.

Abby, I know you typically say to stand aside and offer support if asked, but some of his decisions, like wanting to leave the family business, will have serious negative impacts on the whole family. Is there anything we can do?

CONCERNED BIG BROTHER IN WASHINGTON

DEAR BIG BROTHER: Your brother's wife appears to be very controlling. Is he all right? I ask because you wrote that he has always loved the family business. Because his request to be bought out will affect everyone, all of the principals—including your brother—should meet with your attorney as well as your financial adviser to discuss what that will mean for all of you. If this is being caused by your brother's wife, do not allow her to isolate him. Assure him that you will always be there for him regardless where his path may lead.

■■■■

Good advice for everyone – teens to seniors – is in "The Anger in All of Us and How to Deal With It." To order, send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for $8 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby, Anger Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

DEAR ABBY

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

Pastimes

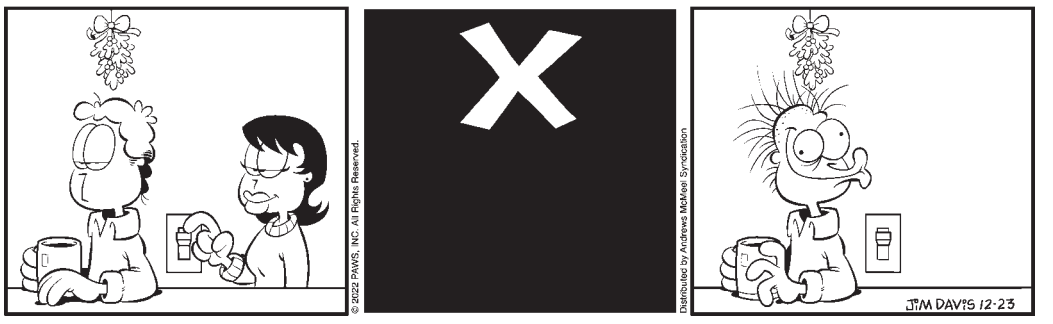
Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson

ONE MORE DAY OF BEING GOOD! THIS HAS BEEN THE LONGEST WEEK OF MY ENTIRE LIFE.
HEY! I'LL BET SANTA'S LOADING UP THE SLEIGH RIGHT NOW! HE'S GOT MILLIONS OF DELIVERIES, RIGHT? HE COULDN'T POSSIBLY STILL BE DECIDING HOW GOOD I AM!
IF HIS DECISION IS MADE, I DON'T HAVE TO IMPRESS HIM ANY MORE! I'M FREE! THE CHARADE IS OVER! I CAN DO WHAT I WANT!
MAYBE HE'S LOADING YOUR STUFF LAST, JUST TO SEE WHAT YOU DO.
YOU THINK? WELL, MAYBE. GEEZ, HE'S A TOUGH OL' GEEZER! WELL, WHAT'S ONE MORE DAY?..SIGH...

Garfield®

By Jim Davis



Adam@home

By Bryan Basset

WOW. YOU REALLY ARE A BAD WRAPPER.
I TOLD YOU!
HERE. TRY WRAPPING THIS TINY LITTLE BOX.
YOU CAN'T GET IN TOO MUCH TROUBLE WITH SOMETHING SO...
...SMALL.
I NEED MORE PAPER.

The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy

WHAT ARE YOU DRINKING?
A NUG OF MOG.
DO YOU MEAN A MUG OF NOG?
MUGGY NUGGY NUG MUGGYS!
HEY, SAL. NO MORE CHRISTMAS CHEER FOR ENO!
PBBBTTT...

CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

1 Lush
4 Soho residence
8 Fine spray
12 J. Edgar's org.
13 Composer Stravinsky
14 Related
15 Forest evergreen
17 Sleeveless garment
18 "Heavens!"
19 Ram's mate
21 Ger. neighbor
22 Flip-flop
26 Young horses
29 "Awesome!"
30 PC program
31 Buckeye state
32 Surpass
33 Pirate's drink
34 HBO rival
35 Saute
36 — apso (small dog)
37 Thrilling feeling
39 Life story
40 Nay undoer
41 Kind of inspection
45 Narcissist's love
48 Footwear storage unit
50 Chanteuse Edith
51 Teeny bit
52 Jurist Lance
53 Pay to play
54 Texter's sign-off
55 Moment

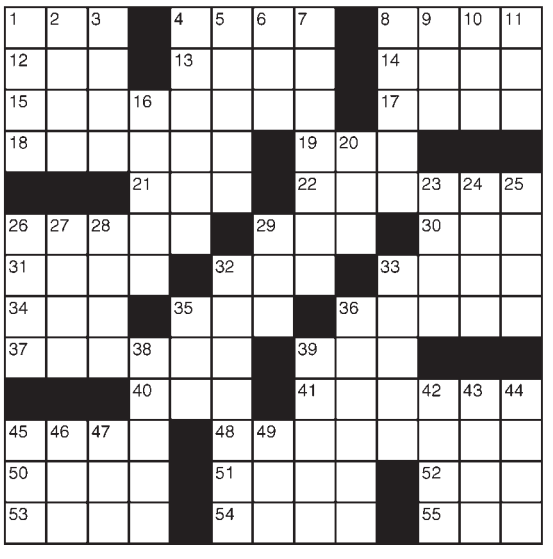
DOWN

1 Bay Area force, briefly
2 Theater award
3 Turner or Fey
4 Type of test
5 Shrek and others
6 Nemesis
7 Maple fluid
8 Expert
9 White House nickname
10 Bro's sib
11 Stick with a kick
16 Poet's muse
20 Bankroll
23 Olympic swimmer Torres
24 Mil. addresses
25 Women's links org.
26 Expense
27 Surprised greeting
28 King of the jungle
29 Trigger's rider
32 Join an environmental protest
33 Specter
35 Aviate
36 Hereditary
38 Blunder
39 Pirate's plunder
42 Showy flower
43 Head, to Henri
44 Fair-hiring org.
45 Hot tub
46 Aachen article
47 Long. crosser
49 Stolen

Solution time: 25 mins.

F	E	M	A		M	A	R	S		W	A	D
E	R	I	C		O	M	I	T		E	L	O
S	L	E	E	P	M	O	D	E		B	M	W
T	E	N	T	H	S			A	P	I	A	N
			I	D		C	A	K	E	S		
G	U	A	C		H	R	S		P	O	N	D
O	R	R			O	U	I			D	E	E
B	L	E	D		P	E	A		M	E	T	S
		A	U	D	I	T		H	A			
M	A	C	A	W			S	I	D	L	E	D
O	R	O		E	L	E	C	T	R	O	D	E
A	N	D		L	Y	R	A		A	L	D	A
T	O	E		T	E	A	R		S	O	A	R

Yesterday's answer 12-23



STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955**! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Noel Wells, 36; Eddie Vedder, 58; Susan Lucci, 76; Harry Shearer, 79.

Happy Birthday: Relax. Simplify your life and put your mind at ease. Dedicate your time and expertise to the people, activities and projects that interest you, and you'll make excellent and prosperous headway. Adjust whatever isn't working in your life, and propose what you intend to do with the people you need and care about most. Your numbers are 2, 13, 16, 27, 36, 39, 46.

ARIES *(March 21-April 19):* Refuse to let anyone suck you into something you don't want to do. It's important to contribute, but you also must feel comfortable and willing to do so to do a good job. Walk away from bullies and those asking for too much. ✪✪

TAURUS *(April 20-May 20):* Refuse to let what's going on daunt you. A positive attitude will help you join in and offer what you can to the festivities. Live in the moment and enjoy long overdue conversations with loved ones, and something good will transpire. ✪✪✪✪

GEMINI *(May 21-June 20):* Set a path that ensures you will complete whatever's on your to-do list. Discipline, high energy and your desire to please someone special will make someone you love grateful. Don't let uncertainty and overspending stand between you and what you want. ✪✪✪

CANCER *(June 21-July 22):* Handle situations and people with kindness, compassion and suggestions. It's a busy time of the year, making it essential to be accepting, forgiving and thankful for what you have. Take the high road and offer peace and love. ✪✪✪

LEO *(July 23-Aug. 22):* Don't let the changes others make upset you. Do what's best for you, and you'll feel good about yourself and what you achieve. Being receptive to new ideas will unlock information you can use to catapult yourself toward a desired direction. ✪✪✪

VIRGO *(Aug. 23-Sept. 22):* You can reach your destination. Don't fret or show worry. A confident look and approach to what you want will win acceptance and the help required to reach your goal. Socializing will help you open doors that were closed in the past; reach out. ✪✪✪✪✪

LIBRA *(Sept. 23-Oct. 22):* If you try to make unnecessary changes at home, someone will challenge you. Shake it off and go with the flow throughout the festive season, but don't lose sight of your dreams. Revisit your plans, adjust and prepare an indisputable case. ✪✪✪✪

SCORPIO *(Oct. 23-Nov. 21):* Discuss matters that need your attention before the year ends. Go over your financial situation and make changes to ensure you are steady moving forward. Don't get into a position that requires shared expenses unless you are the one who needs help. ✪✪✪✪

SAGITTARIUS *(Nov. 22-Dec. 21):* Put your energy where it counts and make someone happy. A kind gesture will go a long way. Showing your feelings isn't a sign of weakness; it's a sign of strength and courage that will enable you to make decisions and proceed. ✪✪✪

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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CAPRICORN *(Dec. 22-Jan. 19):* Sit back and enjoy what you've created for yourself and your loved ones. Share your thoughts with those who hold a special place in your heart, and the feedback you get will encourage you to move forward with minor adjustments. ✪✪✪

AQUARIUS *(Jan. 20-Feb. 18):* Big ideas, small budget, innovative thoughts and, presto, you'll find a way to make everyone feel right at home. Don't worry about keeping up with the neighbors or what others think or do; be yourself and use your imagination, and good things will transpire. ✪✪✪

PISCES *(Feb. 19-March 20):* Refuse to let pressure build and anger rise. Be observant, and you'll realize you've got backup and what it takes to please everyone you love with kind words, positive suggestions and a thoughtful token of affection. Romance is in the stars. ✪✪✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are earnest, courteous and helpful. You are dynamic and original.

✪: Avoid conflicts; work behind the scenes. ✪✪: You can accomplish, but don't rely on others. ✪✪✪: Focus and you'll reach your goals. ✪✪✪✪: Aim high; start new projects. ✪✪✪✪✪: Nothing can stop you; go for gold.

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

				2	7			
		9			8	5		
8					4			2
4	5	2						
7								6
						1	8	4
2			7					3
		1	5			7		
			4	9				

Difficulty Level ★★★★ 12/23

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Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's Answer

4	8	5	7	2	9	6	3	1
2	6	7	1	3	8	4	5	9
1	9	3	6	5	4	2	8	7
5	4	1	2	8	7	3	9	6
7	2	8	9	6	3	5	1	4
6	3	9	4	1	5	8	7	2
9	5	2	3	4	1	7	6	8
3	1	6	8	7	2	9	4	5
8	7	4	5	9	6	1	2	3

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WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the **WONDERWORD.**

CHICHEN ITZA, MEXICO **Solution: 7 letters**

Y	S	E	L	P	M	E	T	N	A	T	A	C	U	Y
I	G	T	C	A	R	V	I	N	G	T	N	I	L	F
M	N	O	C	O	S	U	P	D	Y	R	E	T	A	W
A	T	C	L	A	R	P	I	P	O	T	T	E	R	Y
T	E	P	E	O	F	V	A	C	E	N	O	R	H	T
H	X	L	T	N	E	I	C	N	A	E	N	O	T	S
E	T	M	C	R	S	H	T	O	I	W	E	L	L	S
M	I	U	S	A	R	E	C	R	U	S	C	E	H	A
A	L	E	V	I	S	I	T	R	A	R	H	N	C	H
T	E	S	S	T	A	T	U	E	A	Ⓟ	T	N	R	I
I	L	U	W	A	R	R	I	O	R	Y	Ⓔ	U	A	S
C	G	M	E	E	R	U	T	L	U	C	A	Ⓣ	E	T
S	N	D	M	E	G	R	A	L	L	A	W	M	Ⓢ	O
N	A	K	L	U	K	U	K	I	C	O	P	P	E	R
J	A	G	U	A	R	E	B	M	A	H	C	D	R	Y

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Ancient, Angle, Archeology, Artifacts, Carving, Cenote, Chamber, Copper, Corn, Court, Culture, Diverse, El Castillo, Explore, Flint, History, Incense, Jade, Jaguar, Kukulkan, Large, Mathematics, Maya, Museum, Pottery, Research, Ruin, Spanish, Statue, Step, Stone, Temple, Textile, Throne, Tunnel, Visit, Wall, Warrior, Water, Wells, Yucatan

Yesterday's Answer: Globe

To purchase **WONDERWORD** books, visit www.WonderWordBooks.com, or call 1-800-642-6480.

Nets break loose for 91 points in 1st half, rout Warriors

NEW YORK (AP)— Kevin Durant scored 23 points, all but two in a 91-point first half that was the third-biggest in NBA history, and the Brooklyn Nets routed the Golden State Warriors 143-113 on Wednesday to send the reigning champions staggering home with their second blowout loss in two nights in New York.

With Stephen Curry, Klay Thompson and Andrew Wiggins sidelined, the Warriors fell behind by 44 points in this game and finished 1-5 on their trip to the East.

The Nets matched a franchise record with nine players in double figures and won their seventh straight, even with Kyrie Irving out with right calf tightness.

Raptors 113, Knicks 106

In New York, Pascal Siakam scored a career-high 52 points and Toronto snapped New York's NBA-leading eight-game winning streak.

Siakam added nine rebounds and seven assists in 41 minutes as Toronto snapped its six-game skid. Fred VanVleet scored 28 points and OG Anunoby had 15 as the Raptors won for the fourth time in 16 road games. It was their first win away from home since Nov. 14.

Cavaliers 114, Bucks 106

In Cleveland, Donovan Mitchell scored 36 points and Cleveland finally put together a complete game, beating Milwaukee despite Giannis Antetokounmpo's season-high 45 points.

Darius Garland added 23 points and Jarrett Allen had 19 for the Cavs, who lost their first two games against the Eastern Conference's top team this season. The Cavs improved the NBA's best home record to 16-2, matching their start in the 2016 championship season.

Mavericks 104, Timberwolves 99

In Minneapolis, Luka Doncic had 25 points, 10 assists and nine rebounds and Dallas earned a two-game split in a home-and-home set against Minnesota.

Tim Hardaway Jr. added 21 points after an illness sidelined him Monday night in Dallas' 116-106 loss in Minnesota in which Doncic and coach Jason Kidd were ejected.

Spencer Dinwiddie scored 19 points and Christian Wood added 12 for Dallas, which had lost two in a row.

Magic 116, Rockets 110

In Houston, Franz Wagner scored 25 points, rookie Paolo Banchero had 23 points and 13 rebounds, and Orlando overcame a 15-point second-half deficit to beat Houston.

The Magic took their first lead when Cole Anthony, who finished with 15 points, drilled a 3-pointer to make it 96-95 with 7:11 remaining. Orlando has won seven of eight since beginning the season 5-20.

Thunder 101, Trail Blazers 98

In Oklahoma City, Shai Gilgeous-Alexander scored 27 points and Oklahoma City defeated Portland for the second time in three days.

AP

Brooklyn Nets' Ben Simmons (10) dunks the ball in front of Golden State Warriors' Jordan Poole (3) and Anthony Lamb (40) during the first half of an NBA basketball game Wednesday, Dec. 21, 2022 in New York.

Gilgeous-Alexander had a good week against Portland — he hit a winning basket as time expired against the Trail Blazers on Monday, also in Oklahoma City, to highlight a 35-point performance.

Bulls 110, Hawks 108

In Atlanta, Ayo Dosunmu banked in a putback jumper as time expired and Chicago rallied after blowing an 18-point lead to win its second straight game.

Dosunmu inbounded a pass from the Chicago sideline with four seconds remaining to DeRozan, who missed a jumper with an airball from the left baseline, but Dosunmu was in place to grab the rebound on the right baseline and score at the buzzer.

Clippers 126, Hornets 105

In Los Angeles, Paul George scored 22 points, Nicolas Batum added 21 and injury-ravaged Los Angeles had its whole roster available in a win over Charlotte.

George, Ivica Zubac, Reggie Jackson and Norman Powell returned to the lineup, with Powell making his first appearance since Nov. 29 after missing 10 games because of a groin injury.

Kings 134, Lakers 120

In Sacramento, Calif., Domantas Sabonis had 13 points, 21 rebounds and 12 assists to lead Sacramento past Los Angeles for the second time this season.

Sabonis recorded his second triple-double of the season to go along with nine straight double-doubles and his NBA-leading 22 this year.

All of Sacramento's starters scored in double figures. Rookie Keegan Murray matched his career high with 23 points. Kevin Huerter scored 26 points and Harrison Barnes added 20.

LeBron James scored 31 points and De'Aaron Fox added 22 points and six assists for the Lakers. Lonnie Walker lV scored 19 points, Dennis Schroder had 18 and Thomas Bryant added 17 points and 10 rebounds.

Pacers 117, Celtics 112

In Boston, Tyrese Haliburton scored 33 points as Indiana opened a 30-point lead in the first half before holding off slumping Boston.

Former Celtics player Celtic Aaron Nesmith had 15 points, Chris Duarte added 14 and Myles Turner had 10 to help the Pacers win for the second time in six games.

Jayson Tatum led Boston with 41 points after missing a game because of personal reasons, while point guard Marcus Smart sat out with a non-COVID illness.

76ers 113, Pistons 93

In Philadelphia, Joel Embiid had 22 points and 10 rebounds and Philadelphia used a balanced scoring attack to extend its winning streak to six games.

Tobias Harris had 17 points, despite early foul trouble, and James Harden added 15 points and eight assists for the Sixers. Philadelphia got double-figure scoring from six players, including De'Anthony Melton (12), Georges Niang (11) and Montrezl Harrell (10).

The Sixers' six-game winning streak is their longest since a seven-game run from Dec. 26-Jan 10 in the 2021-22 season. Philadelphia has won eight straight games at home after starting the season 5-5 in their own building.

Analysis: Fitting that Dirk will be celebrated on Christmas

By TIM REYNOLDS
AP BASKETBALL WRITER

The tributes officially started in 2019 with Dirk Nowitzki Way, a street that was renamed in Dallas to honor the greatest Mavericks player of all time. Then in January, the Mavs retired his No. 41 jersey. Then in September, Germany retired the No. 14 jersey he wore for his country.

Even after scoring 30,000 points, he still is not enjoying all the fuss.

"It's been super surreal," Nowitzki said, "and a little embarrassing for me."

Merry Christmas, Dirk. Here comes another celebration. Two of them, actually.

On Wednesday, he'll be announced as a nominee for the 2023 enshrinement class by the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame. And on Sunday, when the Mavs host the Los Angeles Lakers as part of the NBA's Christmas quintupleheader, the Dirk Nowitzki Statue will be unveiled at American Airlines Arena.

It will be the ultimate Christmas present and incredibly fitting that it comes on a day where a slew of international stars that Nowitzki helped pave the way for — Philadelphia's Joel Embiid, Milwaukee's Giannis Antetokounmpo, Denver's Nikola Jokic and fellow Maverick Luka Doncic — will get showcased on the NBA's big day.

"It's been super fun to watch," Nowitzki said when asked about the ongoing imprint international players are making on the game. "And along the way, if I inspired somebody to pick up a basketball or if I motivated a guy to work harder or dream of the NBA, of course, that's humbling to me ... super humbling. That makes me proud, for sure."

It's not a new development. The last four MVP's — in reverse order, Jokic, Jokic, Antetokounmpo, Antetokounmpo — are from Serbia and Greece. It seems reasonable to think that this season's MVP will be an international player as well, with Jokic, Doncic and Embiid likely among the early frontrunners.

Entering Tuesday, the NBA's top five scorers are from five different countries — Embiid (Cameroon), Doncic (Slovenia), Oklahoma City's Shai Gilgeous-Alexander (Canada), Antetokounmpo (Greece) and Kevin Durant (U.S.).

Such was unthinkable just a few years ago. Over a 13-season span, from 2004-05 through 2016-17, only one international player cracked the top five — Nowitzki, who was fourth on two occasions during that stretch. Every other slot was taken by an American.

This is what former Commissioner David Stern wanted — and why he prioritized making the NBA go international.

"It was his vision to truly make the NBA and basketball a global sport," Commissioner Adam Silver said last weekend before a Miami-San Antonio game in Mexico City. "I began at the league in 1992, shortly before the Barcelona Olympics and the Dream Team. We saw the impact that had. Now looking back 30 years, 30 years of playing games in México City, it's really happening."

It's not an accident that Doncic, Antetokounmpo, Jokic and Embiid are getting the Christmas game treatment. They are brands, huge draws globally, and the NBA has embraced international viewers more and more over the years.

Nowitzki preceded them all, a mop-topped German kid who initially wasn't sure if he wanted to come to the NBA when he got drafted and wound up making the best possible decision for him and the Mavericks. He played three times on Christmas; Dallas went 2-1 in those games and Nowitzki averaged 27.3 points.

The Christmas lineup this year goes like this — Philadelphia at New York first, then the Lakers at Dallas, Milwaukee at Boston, Memphis at defending champion Golden State, then Phoenix at Denver in the nightcap. Some star power will be missing, with the Lakers without Anthony Davis and the Warriors without Stephen Curry. It'll be LeBron James' 17th Christmas appearance, and the first for the Grizzlies.

"These are the games that everybody grew up watching," James said last year when asked about Christmas.

The NBA does its part to make sure "everybody" can watch — like the NBA Finals, the Christmas games are being sent to more than 200 countries and territories, with commentating happening in more than 50 languages.

German, of course, will be one of them. The Nowitzki statue depicts his famous one-legged jumper, a shot that changed the game. He was a unicorn when he got to the U.S.; a 7-footer who could shoot, pass and dribble and wasn't just a back-to-the-basket guy. Now, those skills aren't rare to see in big men. They're basically required.

Again, it's so fitting that the statue is coming on Christmas. His game was a gift. And with the way it's been emulated by so many in the last 20 years, it's a gift that keeps on giving.

"That's going to be there forever," Nowitzki said. "I think that's what's so unbelievable, that this statue will stand there, and my kids will grow up with it. That's what's really mindboggling and so amazing about it— that this piece is for really for eternity and will be there long, long after I'm gone."

Colts bench Ryan for 2nd time, will give Foles starting job

INDIANAPOLIS (AP)—Nick Foles waited all season to start taking snaps with the Indianapolis Colts starters.

The 33-year-old quarterback is about to get his chance.

On Wednesday, interim coach Jeff Saturday announced Foles will replace Matt Ryan as Indy's starter against the Los Angeles Chargers, giving Foles his first start since Dec. 26, 2021, and his second since October 2020.

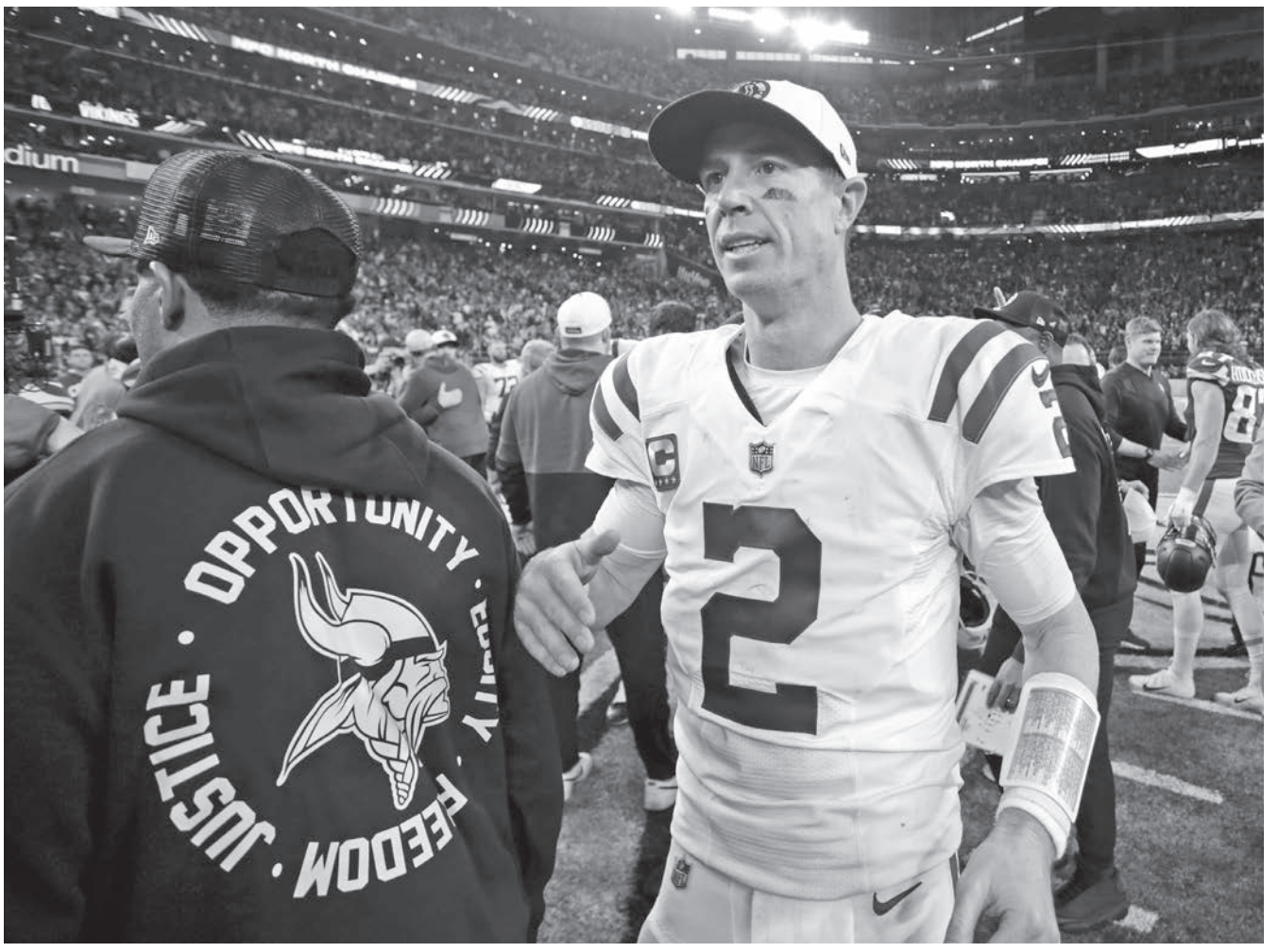
"No, none," Foles said when asked if he's even taken first-team snaps in practice. "You never know what's going to happen each week, it's sort of been that kind of year. Unfortunately, in the NFL there are years like that. For me, it's always just doing what I need to do in my role."

It's been a painful season for the Colts (4-9-1) and Foles, who initially signed as a free agent to rejoin coach Frank Reich only to watch his longtime friend get fired in early November.

He's also seen Indy switch play-callers, fire the offensive coordinator and even got bypassed when Reich initially benched Ryan in October.

Reich turned the team over to second-year quarterback Sam Ehlinger, who attended the same Texas high school as Foles. Indy lost both of Ehlinger's starts.

Foles began this season listed No. 2 on the depth chart, slid to No. 3 and now has been promoted to starter just four days after the Colts blew a 33-0 halftime lead and allowed Minnesota to rally for a 39-36 overtime victory — the largest comeback in NFL history.



AP

Indianapolis Colts quarterback Matt Ryan (2) walks off the field after an NFL football game against the Minnesota Vikings, Saturday, Dec. 17, 2022, in Minneapolis.

"This is never an easy decision and I love Matt, he's a pro's pro and I love the way he's handled it," Saturday said. "I feel bad for Matt but ultimately, Nick gives us the best chance of winning and that's the direction we're headed."

Saturday declined to say whether Ryan or Ehlinger would serve as No. 2 against the Chargers on Monday night.

Ryan's roller-coaster season — and perhaps his career — could be over.

The 37-year-old rallied the Colts in all four of their wins this season, but has been sacked 38 times, fifth in the league, and has a league-high 18 giveaways despite missing two games. Ryan also suffered a separated shoulder in October.

He's scheduled to count $35.2 million against Indy's salary cap next season, but the Colts can free up $17.2 million by releasing the 2016 league MVP and four-time Pro Bowler who ranks fifth in NFL history in completions (5,551) and pass attempts (8,464), seventh in yards passing (62,792) and ninth in touchdown passes (381).

But after last week's historic collapse, a four-turnover fourth quarter that led to 33 points in Indy's previous game at Dallas and four consecutive losses, Saturday pulled the plug on Ryan's starting role and is giving Foles a crash course to show what he can do with a lineup he knows little about.

"I know him and got to know him personally, unfortunately not on the field," said center Ryan Kelly, who will be snapping to his third quarterback this season and eighth since 2017.

"Just doing the walkthrough stuff. Just keep it simple and go out there and play fast. Nick's obviously stayed ready, working out literally every day, keeping his body right."

But it's unclear whether the same guy who replaced the injured Carson Wentz as the Eagles starter in Week 15 of the 2017 season and led Philadelphia to the Super Bowl title can replicate that kind of success in Indy. Foles was the Super Bowl MVP that year after throwing for 373 yards and three TDs while catching another memorable score in the game.

Saturday believes Foles can help stretch the field with more downfield throws and better efficiency and safety Rodney McLeod believes Foles is much the same player he saw in the Eagles locker room in 2017.

"It's his confidence, leadership ability, guys have a way of kind of following Nick and I think also he's a real good quarterback when it comes to deep balls," McLeod said. "He's seen a lot of ball and he's a man of faith and I think you see that kind of calmness he can bring to a huddle."

The Colts are hoping that even applies to a quarterback still getting his feet wet with Indy.

"Sometimes you're with a team for a couple years and then you go in and out and then you play like this is my first time to really be with the guys," Foles said. "For me, it's just getting that mindset of trying to execute this offense, running this offense because really it was training camp and now since then it's really been scout team cards, but I've watched Sam and Matt do a lot of reps."

13-1 Eagles lead the way with 8 players in Pro Bowl Games

By ROB MAADDI
AP PRO FOOTBALL WRITER

The NFL-leading Philadelphia Eagles had a league-best eight players, including quarterback Jalen Hurts, selected for the first Pro Bowl Games.

The league announced rosters for the NFC and AFC on Wednesday. Players from both conferences will compete in weeklong skills competitions culminated with a flag football game on Sunday, February 5, at Allegiant Stadium in Las Vegas. The NFL eliminated its full-contact all-star game in September.

Kansas City and Dallas each had seven players chosen for the Games. San Francisco and Baltimore are next with six. Only two teams — Jacksonville and Chicago — aren't represented on the initial rosters.

Joining Hurts from the Eagles (13-1) are wide receiver A.J. Brown, running back Miles Sanders, right tackle Lane Johnson, center Jason Kelce, left guard Landon Dickerson, linebacker Haason Reddick and cornerback Darius Slay. Hurts, Sanders, Dickerson and Reddick are first-timers. It's Kelce's sixth, Slay's fifth and Johnson's fourth. Sanders and Reddick were selected as backups.

Patrick Mahomes is the AFC's starting quarterback. Josh Allen and Joe Burrow are his backups. Kirk Cousins and Geno Smith are backing up Hurts.

Smith is a first-time pick in his 10th season in the NFL. He's the first quarterback since Rich Gannon (1999) to earn his first Pro Bowl selection in Year 10 or later of his career.

Trent Williams, the 49ers' left tackle, was chosen for the 10th time. Aaron Donald became the first defensive lineman to make the Pro Bowl in each of his first nine seasons. He's the only representative from the defending Super Bowl champion Los Angels Rams (4-10).

Miami's Tyreek Hill was selected to his seventh consecutive Pro Bowl, joining A.J. Green as the only wide receivers to earn Pro Bowl honors in each of their first seven seasons.

Twenty-five of the 88 players selected are first-timers, including rookie cornerbacks Sauce Gardner of the New York Jets and Tariq Woolen of the Seattle Seahawks. It's the second time two rookie cornerbacks made the initial Pro Bowl roster. The first occurred in 1982 when Pro Football Hall of Famer Ronnie Lott and Everson Walls made it.

Saquon Barkley is the NFC's starting running back. Sanders and Dallas Cowboys running back Tony Pollard are the backups. Nick Chubb is the AFC's starting running back. Derrick Henry and Josh Jacobs back him up.

The NFC's starting wideouts are Brown and Justin Jefferson. CeeDee Lamb and Terry McLaurin also made the squad. The AFC's starting receivers are Hill and Stefon Diggs.

Davante Adams and Ja'Marr Chase also made the roster.

George Kittle starts at tight end for the NFC and T.J. Hockenson made the team after a midseason trade from Detroit to Minnesota.

AFC starting tight end Travis Kelce made the team for the eighth time. Mark Andrews backs him up.

The roster selections were determined by the consensus votes of fans, players and coaches.

Each group's vote counted one-third toward determining the teams. The NFL is the only sports league that combines voting by fans, coaches and players to determine its all-stars. It was also the first professional sports league to offer online all-star voting in 1995.

Peyton Manning will coach the AFC team while Eli Manning guides the NFC. Ray Lewis serves as the defensive coordinator for the AFC. DeMarcus Ware handles the role for the NFC.

International Flag football stars Vanita Krouch and Diana Flores were named as offensive coordinators.

The AFC and NFC will start off with five skills competitions on Feb. 2. On Sunday, there will be three flag football games and three additional skills competitions between the two conferences.

The winner of each skills competition earns three points for his conference. There are eight total skills competitions worth a total of 24 available points.

The winner of each of the first two flag games earns six points for his conference. The first two flag games are worth a total of 12 available points.

Points from the eight skills competitions and first two flag games are added together and that will be the score at the beginning of the third and final flag game. The third flag game will determine the overall winner of the Pro Bowl Games.

The flag games will feature a traditional AFC vs. NFC matchup with 27 skill position players available from the full roster for each conference.

Each team will also have one center available on their roster. The game will be played 7 on 7.

Each game will be 20 minutes in length, with two, 10-minute halves on a 50-yard field with two 10-yard end zones.

Touchdowns are worth six points. There are two different options for post-touchdown conversions: 1-point conversion from the 3-yard line and 2-point conversion from the 10-yard line. Safeties and returned 1- or 2-point conversion attempts are worth 2 points.

3 teams lead Agape v-ball tourney

By LEIGH GASES
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CORRESPONDENT

The Jingle Boyz, The Parumpapapums, and Naughty List lead the competitive Pool A and Pool B of the men's division in the 4th Annual Agape Christmas Volleyball Tournament held at the Agape Gymnasium.

The Jingle Boyz jingled all the way to the top of Pool A with a 6-1 win-loss record, while The Parumpapapums and the Naughty List are at 6-1 as well in Pool B.

In the entirety of Saturday's opening games, the boys of Jingle Boyz, which include team captain Mike Omar, Mokyan Kim, Joel Norita, Jerry Saures, Francisco Kumuch, Patricio Blas, Nakashima, Ryan Camacho, and En Yang Pang, faced five foes and defeated four. Their only loss was against the Naughty List in three tough sets, 25-21 23-25 7-15.

Their wins were against We 9 Kings in a blowout of 25-0 in both sets; they beat the Gentlemen's Association in three sets, 25-21 24-26 15-9; Saikyo was defeated in two sets, 25-20 25-13; Asian Airlines lost to them in two sets, 25-18 25-21.

LEIGH GASES

The Parumpapapums' Dylan Mister, right, spikes the ball against a We 9 Kings blocker in their Agape Christmas Volleyball Tournament game last Tuesday at the Agape Gymnasium, earning them their sixth win.

In Monday's games, they handed The Parumpapapums their first loss of the season in two sets, 25-18 25-12; in Tuesday's games, they beat Bradahood in two close sets, 25-18 25-22.

The Parumpapapums, consisting of team captain Tyce Mister, Dylan Mister, Mark McDonald, John Nekaifes, Daniel Nam, Casey Chambers, Blake Mister, Logan Mister, Tony Atalig, and Antonio Deleon Guerrero, were undefeated until their loss to the Boyz.

The foes they've slain on Saturday and Tuesday were the Asian Airlines in two sets, 25-20 25-23; the Naughty List, 26-24, 26-24; Bradahood 25-20, 25-18; Gentlemen's Association, 20-25, 19-25; Saikyo 25-20, 25-17; and We 9 Kings in three tough sets, 25-18, 21-25, 10-15.

The Naughty List, which include team captain Jasper Perez, John Matias, Jermaine Salas, Juruel Magtalas, Jerome Manzon, Gabby San Nicolas, Reiki Tababa, Akira Ota, and Kyle Moon, were handed their only loss by The Parumpapapums in two sets, 24-26, 24-26.

They ended up beating Bradahood in three sets, 22-25, 26-24, 9-15; Asian Airlines 25-13, 25-15; Jingle Boyz in three sets, 21-25, 25-23, 15-7; Gentlemen's Association in two sets, 25-23, 25-17; and Saikyo in two sets 25-23, 25-13.

In the standings behind Jingle Boyz are the Gentlemen's Association with a 3-4 card, third is We 9 Kings with a 2-5 record, then Saikyo with currently no wins and seven losses.

Behind The Parumpapapums and the Naughty List are Bradahood with a 3-4 record and last is Asian Airlines with a 2-5 card.

Results of the women's division along with Thursday's and Friday's games will be published in the next issues of *Saipan Tribune.*

41st Christmas Island Relay tomorrow

By LEIGH GASES
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CORRESPONDENT

About 150 runners are expected to tear up the pavement in Northern Marianas Athletics' 41st Annual Christmas Island Relay set for tomorrow, Christmas Eve, Dec. 24, at 6am.

The 13.7 mile-long course begins south at the Pacific Islands Club in San Antonio and runs all the way through to the north at Last Command Post in Marpi.

The open mixed teams of five runners each will individually alternate through one mile stages from start to finish.

This year's race includes Agape Torch Bearers 1, Agape Torch Bearers 2, #Beastmates, Baby Got Track, Buns&Guns, Buns&Guns-Dos, DMSTottots, Geckos Run For Their Breakfast, Gemini's Rising, Happy Go Runners, Rex's Team, Run Saipan Alpha, Run Saipan Bravo, Run Saipan Pacemakers, Run Saipan Silent Knights, Run Saipan AJA, Saipan Paddling Club, Sleighers, Spaeth Force, US Army 9th MSC Flag, US Army CNMI Flag, US Army United States Flag, Team Santa 2022 Open, Team Taffy, Thisiswhatiwanttodoonxmaseve, and Yuletide Yinzers.

For the youth division, three teams—TeamSanta 2022, Agape Youth 1, and Agape Youth 2—are vying for first place.

"The Annual Christmas Island Relay is just one of the many activities and events that NMA hosts in its continued efforts to promote healthy lifestyle in our community. We invite you to join us and help inspire as many people as possible to get moving to help contribute to uplifting the world through sport," said NMA.

According to Run Saipan president Edward Dela Cruz Jr. there will be "at least 30 minimum transport vehicles on top of law enforcement and race staff vehicles out there. I want motorists to expect heavy traffic at Chalan Piao intersection between 5:45am to 6:10am."

For any questions regarding the event, contact Robin Sapong at (670)788-0929 or email rsapong@gmail.com.

DENISE

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was within the marina, followed by the 10K bike made up of 2K loops with sharp U-turns which challenged my new biking skills. Then ending with a 3K run made up of 1K loops through the marina's with sailboats lining both sides! It was a really fun course!"

Of all the three splits, she said the most challenging part was the swim.

"When I came to Fiji I thought I was a pretty good swimmer, but most of these athletes came from swimming! So I've realized I'm on the lower end of decent. My goal going into the race was to not be last out of the water and catch people on the run and swim. Thanks to my swimming practice I was able to stay with some girls and then catch people on both the run and swim. So I was pleased. Just wish I'd run a little faster."

Myers dedicated her completing the triathlon training and finishing strong in the race to Fiji Triathlon.

"The work this group put together to make everything happen was incredible. Ian, Trisa, Angus, and coach Toby went above and beyond working with me to help me when my bags were lost in transit, letting me borrow a bike, working with my after-camp hours to work on swimming techniques, and making sure I got to experience a bit of Fiji."

She added that the athletes at camp were all so supportive and incredible.

"I roomed with a group of girls who all wanted to be better, it was truly inspirational. Of course a big thanks to Oceania Triathalon and the Triathalon Association of the CNMI for funding the camp and selecting me. And of course my family who always supports me and never complains about me traveling for sport instead of visiting them. It was truly an incredible experience and I've grown athletically, personally, and professionally," said Myers.

Top 3 for the women in the 2022 Oceania Triathlon Pacific Island Championships were Guam's Manami Iijima (38:06), Tahiti's Maidi Susset (40:44), and Fiji's Katie Madison Pattie (41:02).

For the men, the top finishers were Samoa's Jett Lee (39:39), Fiji's Nikotimasi Tu'enadi Croker (41:53), and Fiji's Christian Zadkiel Rokoua (42:55).

SWIMMERS

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"I was super happy that I was able to break my own record by a second for the 200m freestyle because that is what I was working for. I was hoping to get a best time for the 100m freestyle but unfortunately was not able to. Swimming against world class swimmers was a great experience because it gave me more motivation to improve and get to their level."

Isaiah Aleksenko, who reset four national records, said the Melbourne meet is something he wouldn't readily forget.

"I really loved this trip and wish to stay longer. Everyone here is so nice and polite, I hope to visit Australia again. I'm also really happy with the results I got and the times. Everyone who was swimming in the world champs were all very big and tall and as well very fast. I hope to go to the World Champs again and get better times and more records."

Shoko Litulumar, meanwhile, admitted she could've swam better during the 2022 FINA World Championships.

"Overall, I feel like I could have done better. Seeing the top athletes swim warm up right next to me made me feeI like I have a lot of things I need to improve on, such as technique, stamina, physical strength, and mental state. I need to be in my top form to do my best and be the best. So until the next competition, I will do everything in my power to improve myself for the better," said Litulumar, who was a member of two record-breaking relay teams.

Even their parents chimed in on the progress of their children competing in Australia.

"Being a parent of an NMI national swimming team member, I'm so very proud of my daughter Maria Corazon Ayson Batallones that she is bringing the name of our island 'Saipan' to the World Championship," said Judith Ayson Batallones.

"I cannot explain how much effort Shoko puts into swimming, but swimming is her high priority. I am proud that she is so happy to represent the CNMI. I'm thankful for coach Hiro and the team," said Ayumi Litulumar, Shoko's mother.

"I would like to express my appreciation for all his teammates, federation, and coach. Team NMI has brought honor, recognition, and respect to the NMI. To take pride in the countless hours, he spent training, responding to the fair demands he received from his coach. His love for his teammates and the sport of swimming is evident to all of us. And now I hope he's ready to compete in the biggest competition of all: life!" said Suzuki's mother Yukari Suzuki.

All four CNMI swimmers contributed to the nine national records broken.

Aleksenko broke four NMI records—the 100m butterfly, 200m butterfly, 50m freestyle, and 50m backstroke.

Suzuki, meanwhile, eclipsed his own record in the 200m freestyle.

Batallones, for her part, obliterated the old record in the 50m breastroke and also reset the previous mark in the 100m breastroke.

In the relay, the quartet of Aleksenko, Suzuki, Batallones, and Litulumar swam new standards in both the 50m x 4 mixed free relay and medley free relay.

Hiroyuki Kimura served as CNMI national coach in the Melbourne meet.

U14

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players Stephen Rioja and two from Leonard Kaee III, which was enough to give the W for Guam as the NMI boys couldn't find their footing.

In the second match, Guam's Trystan Santos opened up the game four minutes in, followed by another shot from teammate Chima Mbakwem Jr. five minutes later. One more goal was made by Peter Roy Barcinas 33 minutes into the game, with the NMI boys silenced throughout the first half.

The NMI's Anton Megino finally found the net in the 38th minute to put one up on the scoreboard. It was too late to catch up though, as Guam's Eli Brown scored the fourth goal in the 43rd minute and Leonard Kaee III scored the fifth goal in the 53rd.

Sikkel scored the last goal for the NMI in the 74th minute.

Despite the losses, Yobech acknowledged Guam's skills and said, "we enjoy the challenge and opportunity to play against higher level opponents."

"So as our island's football community grows, we aim to develop a style of play that is distinctly our own. So the objective of these games was to be able to implement that style of play against a team that was not going to let us have our way. We were able to keep the ball under heavy pressure at times but there is still a lot of fine tuning that needs to happen for the next time we play our neighbors," said Yobech on the team's performance.

Yobech then thanked the Guam Football Association and the team's supporters. "Our coaching staff would like to thank GFA for games well fought, and our home crowd for their incredible support over the last few weeks building up to these games."

Nets break loose for 91 points in 1st half, rout Warriors

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Denise finishes fifth in Nadi

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Denise Myers finished fifth among the women in the 2022 Oceania Triathlon Pacific Island Championships held last Sunday in Nadi, Fiji.

The 34-year-old health and physical education instructor for the Northern Marianas College completed the race in 45:56. She had splits of 8:22 on the 400m swim, 24:37 on the 10K bike, and 12:57 on the 10K run.

Myers said before the race, participants actually took part in the Pacific Islands Training Camp.

"We spent the week practicing and learning skills and then raced on Sunday, our last day. So I think I was chosen because I wasn't able to join the team when they were learning for the [Pacific] Mini Games because I was training for athletics. I'm so lucky to have been chosen!"

Myers said before flying to Fiji she really worked on sharpening her biking skills.

"Before leaving I was focusing my training on biking because I knew the least about it. I was lucky that an incredible group of bikers—Pam, Heather, Heather, Kathy, Robyn, Lilly, Derek, and Dixie—all let me join them and helped me out with tips and tricks!"

The course at Vunda Marina, the Missouri native said, was daunting but fun because it involved a lot of loops.

"So the 400m swim was technically open water but it

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CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Denise Myers is all smiles after completing the swim split of the 2022 Oceania Triathlon Pacific Island Championships held last Sunday in Nadi, Fiji.

Swimmers experience ups in Down Under

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSOCIATE EDITOR

The CNMI National Swimming Team didn't only reset nine national records in last week's 2022 FINA World Championships in Melbourne, Australia, but also experienced so many highs in the Land Down Under.

Maria Batallones, who broke two records in the short-course meet, was very proud of her results and her performance in the 2022 FINA World Championships.

"I was definitely not expecting such great results. This all came to me as a surprise, which I am very happy about. It was such a fun experience to be racing and an opportunity I enjoyed. This competition brought so much joy to me. I was more excited than nervous and I was very comfortable in the environment. It's a great environment and very different from usual," she said.

Jinnosuke Suzuki, for his part, said swimming against the best in the world in the World Championships only made him better.

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CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
From left, Jinnosuke Suzuki, Shoko Litulumar, coach Hiroyuki Kimura, Maria Batallones, and Isaiah Aleksenko at the Central Sports Club Training Center in Tokyo after their stint in the 2022 FINA World Championships in Melbourne, Australia.

U14 soccer training matches 'good marker' for NMI team

By LEIGH GASES
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CORRESPONDENT

NMI U14 coach Jireh Yobech said that the U14 soccer matches between the NMI and Guam are "always a good marker for how we are developing as a football nation," even with the two losses NMI were handed last Monday and Tuesday at the NMI Soccer Training Center in Koblerville.

The NMI U14 boys fell in a two-game sweep against Guam, with a 3-6 final score on Monday and 2-5 on Tuesday.

In the first game, NMI drew first blood, with Moshe Sikkel breaking through Guam's defenses in the 11th minute. His teammate Stephen Yeom followed that up with a score of his own for an early 2-0 lead.

However, Guam then rolled through the first half with a reply of three goals to take the lead by one.

NMI's Maximus Taitano then found the back of the net to tie the game up, 3-3. But three more goals resounded from the cleats of Guam

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CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
NMI U14's Stephen Yeom tries to keep a handle on the ball against a Guam U14 defender during their training match last Monday at the NMI Soccer Training Center in Koblerville.